THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. ROBERT HALL, A.M.

VOL. II.

SERMONS, CHARGES, AND REVIEWS.

Relig. Theol.

THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT HALL, A.M.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY

OLINTHUS GREGORY, LL.D., F.R A.S.

AND

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER AND WRITINGS,

BY JOHN FOSTER,

AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON DECISION OF CHARACTER," ETC.

VOL. II.

SERMONS, CHARGES, AND REVIEWS.

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MODERN INFIDELITY CONSIDERED WITH RESPECT TO ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY:

IN

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE BAPTIST MEETING, CAMBRIDGE,

IN NOVEMBER, 1799.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.
St Paul.

Sunt qui in fortunæ jam casibus omnia ponant,
Et nullo credant mundum rectore moveri,
Natura volvente vices et lucis et anni;
Atque ideo intrepidi quæcunque altaria tangunt.
Juv.

PREFACE.

The author knows not whether it be necessary to apologize for the extraordinary length of this sermon, which so much exceeds the usual limits of public discourses; for it is only for the reader to conceive (by a fiction of the imagination, if he pleases so to consider it) that the patience of his audience indulged him with their attention during its delivery. The fact is, not being in the habit of writing his sermons, this discourse was not committed to paper till after it was delivered: so that the phraseology may probably vary, and the bulk be somewhat extended: but the substance is certainly retained.

He must crave the indulgence of the religious public, for having blended so little *theology* with it. He is fully aware that the chief attention of a christian minister should be occupied in explaining the doctrines, and enforcing the duties, of genuine christianity. Nor is he chargeable, he hopes, in the exercise of his public functions, with any remarkable deviation from this rule of conduct: yet he is equally convinced, excursions into

other topics are sometimes both lawful and necessary. The versatility of error demands a correspondent variety in the methods of defending truth: and from whom have the public more right to expect its defence, in opposition to the encroachments of error and infidelity, than from those who profess to devote their studies and their lives to the advancement of virtue and religion? Accordingly, a multitude of publications on these subjects, equally powerful in argument, and impressive in manner, have issued from divines of different persuasions, which must be allowed to have done the utmost honour to the clerical profession. The most luminous statements of the evidences of christianity, on historical grounds, have been made; the petulant cavils of infidels satisfactorily refuted; and their ignorance, if not put to shame, at least amply exposed: so that revelation, as far as truth and reason can prevail, is on all sides triumphant.

There is one point of view, however, in which the respective systems remain to be examined, which, though hitherto little considered, is forced upon our attention by the present conduct of our adversaries; that is, their *influence on society*. The controversy appears to have taken a new turn. The advocates of infidelity, baffled in the field of argument, though unwilling to relinquish the contest, have changed their mode of attack; and seem less disposed to impugn the authority, than to supersede the use, of revealed religion, by giving such representations of man and of society as are calculated to make its sanctions appear unreasonable and unnecessary. Their aim is not so much to discredit the preten-

sions of any particular religion as to set aside the principles common to all.

To obliterate the sense of Deity, of moral sanctions, and a future world; and by these means to prepare the way for the total subversion of every institution, both social and religious, which men have been hitherto accustomed to revere, is evidently the principal object of modern sceptics; the first sophists who have avowed an attempt to govern the world, without inculcating the persuasion of a superior power. It might well excite our surprise to behold an effort to shake off the yoke of religion, which was totally unknown during the prevalence of gross superstition, reserved for a period of the world distinguished from every other by the possession of a revelation more pure, more perfect, and better authenticated, than the enlightened sages of antiquity ever ventured to anticipate, were we not fully persuaded the immaculate holiness of this revelation is precisely that which renders it disgusting to men who are determined at all events to retain their vices. Our Saviour furnishes the solution:—*They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; neither will they come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved.*

While all the religions, the Jewish excepted, which, previous to the promulgation of christianity, prevailed in the world, partly the contrivance of human policy, partly the offspring of ignorant fear, mixed with the mutilated remains of traditionary revelation, were favourable to the indulgence of some vices, and but feebly restrained the practice of others; betwixt vice of every sort and in every

degree, and the religion of Jesus, there subsists an irreconcilable enmity, an eternal discord. The dominion of christianity being, in the very essence of it, the dominion of virtue, we need look no further for the sources of hostility in any who oppose it, than their attachment to vice and disorder.

This view of the controversy, if it be just, demonstrates its supreme importance; and furnishes the strongest plea, with every one with whom it is not a matter of indifference whether vice or virtue, delusion or truth, govern the world, to exert his talents, in whatever proportion they are possessed, in *contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.* In such a crisis, is it not best for christians of all denominations, that they may better concentrate their forces against the common adversary, to suspend for the present their internal disputes; imitating the policy of wise states, who have never failed to consider the invasion of an enemy as a signal for terminating the contests of party? Internal peace is the best fruit we can reap from external danger. The momentous contest at issue betwixt the christian church and infidels may instruct us how trivial, for the most part, are the controversies of its members with each other; and that the different ceremonies, opinions, and practices, by which they are distinguished, correspond to the variety of feature and complexion discernible in the offspring of the same parent, among whom there subsists the greatest family likeness. May it please God so to dispose the minds of christians of every visible church and community, *that Ephraim may no longer vex Judah, nor Judah*

Ephraim; that the only rivalry felt in future may be, who shall most advance the interests of our common christianity; and the only provocation sustained, that of *provoking each other to love and good works!* When, at the distance of more than half a century, christianity was assaulted by a *Woolston*, a *Tindal*, and a *Morgan*, it was ably supported, both by clergymen of the established church, and writers among protestant dissenters. The labours of a *Clarke* and a *Butler* were associated with those of a *Doddridge*, a *Leland*, and a *Lardner*, with such equal reputation and success, as to make it evident that the intrinsic excellence of religion needs not the aid of external appendages; but that, with or without a dowry, her charms are of sufficient power to fix and engage the heart.

The writer of this discourse will feel himself happy, should his example stimulate any of his brethren, of superior abilities, to contribute their exertions in so good a cause. His apology for not entering more at large into the proofs of the being of a God,* and the evidences of Christianity,† is, that these subjects have been already

* See an excellent sermon on Atheism, by the Rev. Mr. Estlin, of Bristol, at whose meeting the substance of this discourse was first preached. In the sermon referred to, the argument for the existence of a Deity is stated with the utmost clearness and precision; and the sophistry of Dupuis, a French infidel, refuted in a very satisfactory manner.

† It is almost superfluous to name a work so universally known as Dr. Paley's View of the Evidences of Christianity, which is probably, without exception, the most clear and satisfactory statement of the historical proofs of the christian religion ever exhibited in any age or country.

handled with great ability by various writers; and that he wished rather to confine himself to one view of the subject—The total incompatibility of sceptical principles with the existence of society. Should his life be spared, he may probably, at some future time, enter into a fuller and more particular examination of the infidel philosophy, both with respect to its speculative principles, and its practical effects; its influence on society, and on the individual. In the mean time he humbly consecrates this discourse to the honour of that Saviour, who, when the means of a more liberal offering are wanting, commends the widow's mite.

CAMBRIDGE,
January 18, 1800.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

NOTHING can be more erroneous than the idea, entertained by a few persons, that Mr. Hall recited his sermons *memoriter*, from the study of a previously written composition. His eloquence was the spontaneous result of his vigorous and richly stored intellect, and needed not the aid of the usual expedients of men of ordinary mind. There is great reason to believe that, during the entire extent of his ministry, he only committed one sermon to memory from a previously composed manuscript, and that was the second in this volume, "Reflections on War." It was preached on a day of thanksgiving, at the termination of a long and dreadful war; it was a publicly announced sermon, to aid the funds of a benevolent society; persons of different religious and political sentiments were expected to be assembled, at a time when the violent party-feelings excited by the French Revolution of 1789 had been but little subsided; and Mr. Hall, afraid of yielding to his own emotions on such an occasion, and perhaps of disturbing the feelings of harmony which it was hoped would prevail, thought it advisable for once to deviate from his usual course. That course was, very briefly to sketch, commonly upon a sheet of letter paper, (in some cases rather more fully,) the plan of the proposed discourse, marking the divisions, specifying a few texts, and sometimes writing the first sentence; or, occasionally, a few other sentences, especially in those parts where an argument could not be adequately stated without great technical correctness of language. This he regarded

as "digging a channel for his thoughts to flow in." Then, calling into exercise the power of abstraction, which he possessed in a degree I never saw equalled, he would, whether alone or not, pursue his trains of thought, retrace and extend them, until the whole were engraven on his mind; and, when once so fixed in their entire connexion, they were never after obliterated. The result was on all occasions the same; so that without recurring to the ordinary expedients, or loading his memory with words and phrases, he uniformly brought his mind, with an unburdened vigour and elasticity, to bear upon its immediate purpose, recalling the selected train of thought, and communicating it to others, in diction the most felicitous, appropriate, and impressive. This was uniformly the case with regard to the tenour and substance of his discourses; but the most striking and impressive passages were often, strictly speaking, extemporaneous.

On various occasions I have ascertained the correctness of his recollection as to trains of thought and matters of arrangement. Thus, on drawing his attention fully to an interesting conversation which occurred nearly thirty years before, he has given as vivid and graphic a sketch of the persons present, their positions in the room, and of the main topics discussed, as though all had occurred in the preceding week. So again, with respect to sermons preached early in the present century, and which seemed to have entirely escaped from his recollection; when a reference to some illustration, or the mode of treating some subsidiary topic, has supplied the adequate clew, he has accurately described the plan, the reasoning, the object of the discourse, the illustrations employed, the principal texts adduced, &c., dwelling especially, as was always most natural to him, upon the parts that he regarded as defective.

The history of the following sermon, on "Modern Infidelity," may serve still further to illustrate the peculiar structure of Mr. Hall's intellect. He preached it first at Bristol, in October, 1799, and again at Cambridge early in the month

of November. Having yielded to the solicitations of his friends, and consented to its publication, there remained two difficulties, that of writing down the sermon (of which not a single sentence was upon paper), and that of superintending the press. I, who then resided at Cambridge, offered to undertake both these, provided he would engage not to go farther than ten miles from Cambridge, and allow me to follow him, wherever he went, to obtain " copy," as it should be needed. He acceded to that part of the arrangement which related to the printing; but would not consent that I should be his amanuensis on that occasion. The writing, therefore, he undertook himself, but with great reluctance, on account of the severe pain which even then (and, indeed, much earlier) he experienced when remaining long in a sitting posture. The work, in consequence, proceeded slowly, and with many interruptions. At first I obtained from him eight pages, and took them to the printer; after a few days, four pages more; then two or three pages; then a more violent attack of his distressing pain in the back compelled him to write two or three pages *while lying on the floor;* and soon afterwards a still more violent paroxysm occasioned a longer suspension of his labour. After an interval of a week, the work was renewed at the joint entreaty of myself and other friends. It was pursued in the same manner, two or three pages being obtained for the printer at one time, a similar portion after a day or two, until, at the end of seven weeks, the task was completed. During the whole time of the composition, thus conducted, Mr. Hall never saw a single page of the printer's work. When I applied for more " copy," he asked what it was that he had written last, and then proceeded. Very often, after he had given me a small portion, he would inquire if he had written it nearly in the words which he had employed in delivering the sermon orally. After he had written down the striking apostrophe which occurs at page 52, of the present edition— " Eternal God! on what are thine enemies intent! what are

those enterprises of guilt and horror, that, for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of Heaven must not *penetrate!*"—he asked, "Did I say *penetrate*, Sir, when I preached it?" "Yes." "Do you think, Sir, I may venture to alter it? for no man who considered the force of the English language would use a word of three syllables there, but from absolute necessity." "You are doubtless at liberty to alter it, if you think well." "Then be so good, Sir, to take your pencil, and for *penetrate* put *pierce; pierce* is the word, Sir, and the only word to be used there." I have now the evidence of this before me, in the entire manuscript, which I carefully preserve among my richest literary treasures.

At the end of seven weeks Mr. Hall's labour, thus conducted, being, greatly to his delight, brought to a close, I presented him with a complete copy of his printed sermon, *not one word* of which he had seen in its progress.

During this interval, he had preached at least twenty times, had paid his pastoral visits, as usual, had been often in the society of the literary men with whom he then associated, and had, with all his characteristic ardour, carried on, simultaneously, two distinct courses of reading.

I mistake greatly, if, after the perusal of this simple narrative, the reader will not turn to the sermon with additional relish, and meditate with augmented pleasure upon the peculiarities of this most valuable production, and the singular character of its author's mind.

OLINTHUS GREGORY.

ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY.
June 1, 1831.

A SERMON.

EPHES. ii. 12.

Without God in the world.

As the christian ministry is established for the instruction of men, throughout every age, in truth and holiness, it must adapt itself to the ever-shifting scenes of the moral world, and stand ready to repel the attacks of impiety and error, under whatever form they may appear. The church and the world constitute two societies so distinct, and are governed by such opposite principles and maxims, that, as well from this contrariety, as from the express warnings of scripture, true christians must look for a state of warfare, with this consoling assurance, that the church, like the burning bush beheld by Moses in the land of Midian, may be encompassed with flames, but will never be consumed.

When she was delivered from the persecuting power of Rome, she only experienced a change of trials. The oppression of external violence was followed by the more dangerous and insidious attacks of internal enemies. The freedom of inquiry claimed and asserted at the reformation, degenerated, in the hands of men who professed the principles without possessing the spirit of the reformers, into a fondness for speculative refinements; and consequently into a source of dispute, faction, and heresy. While protestants attended more to the points on which they differed than to those on which they agreed; while more zeal was employed in settling ceremonies and defending subtleties, than in enforcing plain revealed truths; the lovely fruits of peace and charity perished under the storms of controversy.

In this disjointed and disordered state of the christian church, they who never looked into the interior of christianity were apt to suspect, that to a subject so fruitful in particular disputes must attach a general uncertainty; and that a religion founded on revelation could never have occasioned such discordancy of principle and practice among its disciples. Thus infidelity is the joint offspring of an irreligious temper, and unholy speculation, employed, not in examining the evidences of christianity, but in detecting the vices and imperfections of professing christians. It has passed through various stages, each distinguished by higher gradations of impiety; for when men arrogantly abandon their guide, and wilfully shut their eyes on the light of heaven, it is wisely ordained that their errors shall multiply at every step, until their extravagance confutes itself, and the mischief of their principles works its own antidote. That such has been the progress of infidelity will be obvious from a slight survey of its history.

Lord HERBERT, the first and purest of our English free-thinkers, who flourished in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First, did not so much impugn the doctrine or the morality of the Scriptures, as attempt to supersede their necessity, by endeavouring to show that the great principles of the unity of God—a moral government, and a future world—are taught with sufficient clearness by the light of nature. BOLINGBROKE, and some of his successors, advanced much farther, and attempted to invalidate the proofs of the moral character of the Deity, and consequently all expectations of rewards and punishments; leaving the Supreme Being no other perfections than those which belong to a first cause, or almighty contriver. After him, at a considerable distance, followed HUME, the most subtle, if not the most philosophical of the deists; who, by perplexing the relations of cause and effect, boldly aimed to introduce an universal scepticism, and to pour a more than Egyptian darkness into the whole region of morals. Since his time sceptical writers have sprung up in abundance, and infidelity has allured multitudes to its

standard: the young and the superficial by its dexterous sophistry, the vain by the literary reputation of its champions, and the profligate by the licentiousness of its principles. Atheism, the most undisguised, has at length begun to make its appearance.

Animated by numbers, and emboldened by success, the infidels of the present day have given a new direction to their efforts, and impressed a new character on the ever-growing mass of their impious speculations.

By uniting more closely with each other, by giving a sprinkling of irreligion to all their literary productions, they aim to engross the formation of the public mind; and, amidst the warmest professions of attachment to virtue, to effect an entire disruption of morality from religion. Pretending to be the teachers of virtue, and the guides of life, they propose to revolutionize the morals of mankind; to regenerate the world by a process entirely new; and to rear the temple of virtue, not merely without the aid of religion, but on the renunciation of its principles, and the derision of its sanctions. Their party has derived a great accession of numbers and strength from events the most momentous and astonishing in the political world, which have divided the sentiments of Europe betwixt hope and terror; and which, however they may issue, have, for the present, swelled the ranks of infidelity. So rapidly, indeed, has it advanced since this crisis, that a great majority on the continent, and in England a considerable proportion of those who pursue literature as a profession,* may justly be considered as the open or disguised abettors of atheism.

With respect to the sceptical and religious systems, the inquiry at present is not so much which is the truest in speculation, as which is the most useful in practice; or, in other words, whether morality will be best promoted by considering it as a part of a great and comprehensive law, emanating from the will of a supreme, omnipotent legislator; or as a mere expedient, adapted to our pre-

* By those who pursue literature as a profession, the author would be understood to mean that numerous class of literary men who draw their principal subsistence from their writings.

sent situation, enforced by no other motives than those which arise from the prospects and interests of the present state. The absurdity of atheism having been demonstrated so often and so clearly by many eminent men, that this part of the subject is exhausted, I should hasten immediately to what I have more particularly in view, were I not apprehensive a discourse of this kind may be expected to contain some statement of the argument in proof of a Deity; which, therefore, I shall present in as few and plain words as possible.

When we examine a watch, or any other piece of machinery, we instantly perceive marks of design. The arrangement of its several parts, and the adaptation of its movements to one result, show it to be a contrivance; nor do we ever imagine the faculty of contriving to be in the watch itself, but in a separate agent. If we turn from art to nature, we behold a vast magazine of contrivances; we see innumerable objects replete with the most exquisite design. The human eye, for example, is formed with admirable skill for the purpose of sight, the ear for the function of hearing. As in the productions of art we never think of ascribing the power of contrivance to the machine itself, so we are certain the skill displayed in the human structure is not a property of man, since he is very imperfectly acquainted with his own formation. If there be an inseparable relation betwixt the ideas of a contrivance and a contriver; and it be evident, in regard to the human structure, the designing agent is not man himself, there must undeniably be some separate invisible being, who is his former. This great Being we mean to indicate by the appellation of Deity.

This reasoning admits but of one reply. Why, it will be said, may we not suppose the world has been always continued as it is; that is, that there has been a constant succession of finite beings, appearing and disappearing on the earth from all eternity? I answer, Whatever is supposed to have occasioned this constant succession, exclusive of an intelligent cause, will never account for the undeniable marks of design visible in all finite beings. Nor is the absurdity of supposing a contrivance without

a contriver diminished by this imaginary succession; but rather increased, by being repeated at every step of the series.

Besides, an eternal succession of finite beings involves in it a contradiction, and is therefore plainly impossible. As the supposition is made to get quit of the idea of any one having existed from eternity, each of the beings in the succession must have begun in time: but the succession itself is eternal. We have then the succession of beings infinitely earlier than any being in the succession; or, in other words, a series of beings running on, *ad infinitum*, before it reached any particular being, which is absurd.

From these considerations it is manifest there must be some eternal Being, or nothing could ever have existed: and since the beings which we behold bear in their whole structure evident marks of wisdom and design, it is equally certain that he who formed them is a wise and intelligent agent.

To prove the unity of this great Being, in opposition to a plurality of gods, it is not necessary to have recourse to metaphysical abstractions. It is sufficient to observe, that the notion of more than one author of nature is inconsistent with that harmony of design which pervades her works; that it explains no appearances, is supported by no evidence, and serves no purpose but to embarrass and perplex our conceptions.

Such are the proofs of the existence of that great and glorious Being whom we denominate God; and it is not presumption to say, it is impossible to find another truth in the whole compass of morals, which, according to the justest laws of reasoning, admits of such strict and rigorous demonstration.

But I proceed to the more immediate object of this discourse, which, as has been already intimated, is not so much to evince the falsehood of scepticism as a theory, as to display its mischievous effects, contrasted with those which result from the belief of a Deity, and a future state. The subject, viewed in this light, may be considered under two aspects; the influence of the

opposite systems on the principles of morals, and on the formation of character. The first may be styled their direct, the latter their equally important, but indirect consequence and tendency.

I. The sceptical, or irreligious system, subverts the whole foundation of morals. It may be assumed as a maxim, that no person can be required to act contrarily to his greatest good, or his highest interest, comprehensively viewed in relation to the whole duration of his being. It is often our duty to forego our own interest *partially*, to sacrifice a smaller pleasure for the sake of a greater, to incur a present evil in pursuit of a distant good of more consequence. In a word, to arbitrate amongst interfering claims of inclination is the moral arithmetic of human life. But to risk the happiness of the whole duration of our being in any case whatever, were it possible, would be foolish; because the sacrifice must, by the nature of it, be so great as to preclude the possibility of compensation.

As the present world, on sceptical principles, is the only place of recompence, whenever the practice of virtue fails to promise the greatest sum of present good, (cases which often occur in reality, and much oftener in appearance,) every motive to virtuous conduct is superseded; a deviation from rectitude becomes the part of wisdom; and, should the path of virtue, in addition to this, be obstructed by disgrace, torment, or death, to persevere would be madness and folly, and a violation of the first and most essential law of nature. Virtue, on these principles, being in numberless instances at war with self-preservation, never can, or ought to become, a fixed habit of the mind.

The system of infidelity is not only incapable of arming virtue for great and trying occasions, but leaves it unsupported in the most ordinary occurrences. In vain will its advocates appeal to a moral sense, to benevolence and sympathy; for it is undeniable that these impulses may be overcome. In vain will they expatiate on the tranquillity and pleasure attendant on a virtuous course:

for though you may remind the offender that in disregarding them he has violated his nature, and that a conduct consistent with them is productive of much internal satisfaction; yet if he reply that his taste is of a different sort, that there are other gratifications which he values more, and that every man must choose his own pleasures, the argument is at an end.

Rewards and punishments, assigned by infinite power, afford a palpable and pressing motive which can never be neglected without renouncing the character of a rational creature: but tastes and relishes are not to be prescribed.

A motive in which the reason of man shall acquiesce, enforcing the practice of virtue at all times and seasons, enters into the very essence of moral obligation. Modern infidelity supplies no such motives: it is therefore essentially and infallibly a system of enervation, turpitude, and vice.

This chasm in the construction of morals can only be supplied by the firm belief of a rewarding and avenging Deity, who binds duty and happiness, though they may seem distant, in an indissoluble chain; without which whatever usurps the name of virtue, is not a principle, but a feeling; not a determinate rule, but a fluctuating expedient, varying with the tastes of individuals, and changing with the scenes of life.

Nor is this the only way in which infidelity subverts the foundation of morals. All reasoning on morals presupposes a distinction between inclinations and duties, affections and rules. The former prompt, the latter prescribe. The former supply motives to action; the latter regulate and control it. Hence it is evident, if virtue have any just claim to authority, it must be under the latter of these notions, that is, under the character of a law. It is under this notion, *in fact*, that its dominion has ever been acknowledged to be paramount and supreme.

But without the intervention of a superior will, it is impossible there should be any moral laws, except in the lax metaphorical sense in which we speak of the laws of matter and motion. Men being essentially equal, morality

is, on these principles, only a stipulation, or silent compact, into which every individual is supposed to enter, as far as suits his convenience, and for the breach of which he is accountable to nothing but his own mind. His own mind is his law, his tribunal, and his judge!

Two consequences, the most disastrous to society, will inevitably follow the general prevalence of this system;—the frequent perpetration of great crimes, and the total absence of great virtues.

1. In those conjunctures which tempt avarice or inflame ambition, when a crime flatters with the prospect of impunity, and the certainty of immense advantage, what is to restrain an atheist from its commission? To say that remorse will deter him is absurd; for remorse, as distinguished from pity, is the sole offspring of religious belief, the extinction of which is the great purpose of the infidel philosophy.

The dread of punishment or infamy, from his fellow-creatures, will be an equally ineffectual barrier; because crimes are only committed under such circumstances as suggest the hope of concealment: not to say that crimes themselves will soon lose their infamy and their horror, under the influence of that system which destroys the sanctity of virtue, by converting it into a low calculation of worldly interest. Here the sense of an ever-present Ruler, and of an avenging Judge, is of the most awful and indispensable necessity; as it is that alone which impresses on all crimes the character of *folly*, shows that duty and interest in every instance coincide, and that the most prosperous career of vice, the most brilliant successes of criminality, are but an *accumulation of wrath against the day of wrath.*

As the frequent perpetration of great crimes is an inevitable consequence of the diffusion of sceptical principles; so, to understand this consequence in its full extent, we must look beyond their immediate effects, and consider the disruption of social ties, the destruction of confidence, the terror, suspicion, and hatred, which must prevail in that state of society in which barbarous deeds are familiar. The tranquillity which pervades a

well-ordered community, and the mutual good offices which bind its members together, are founded on an implied confidence in the indisposition to annoy; in the justice, humanity, and moderation of those among whom we dwell. So that the worst consequence of crimes is, that they impair the stock of public charity and general tenderness. The dread and hatred of our species would infallibly be grafted on a conviction that we were exposed every moment to the surges of an unbridled ferocity, and that nothing but the power of the magistrate stood between us and the daggers of assassins. In such a state, laws, deriving no support from public manners, are unequal to the task of curbing the fury of the passions; which, from being concentrated into selfishness, fear, and revenge, acquire new force. Terror and suspicion beget cruelty, and inflict injuries by way of prevention. Pity is extinguished in the stronger impulse of self-preservation. The tender and generous affections are crushed; and nothing is seen but the retaliation of wrongs, and the fierce and unmitigated struggle for superiority. This is but a faint sketch of the incalculable calamities and horrors we must expect, should we be so unfortunate as ever to witness the triumph of modern infidelity.

2. This system is a soil as barren of great and sublime virtues as it is prolific in crimes. By great and sublime virtues are meant, those which are called into action on great and trying occasions, which demand the sacrifice of the dearest interests and prospects of human life, and sometimes of life itself: the virtues, in a word, which, by their rarity and splendour, draw admiration, and have rendered illustrious the character of patriots, martyrs, and confessors. It requires but little reflection to perceive, that whatever veils a future world, and contracts the limits of existence within the present life, must tend, in a proportionable degree, to diminish the grandeur and narrow the sphere of human agency.

As well might you expect exalted sentiments of justice from a professed gamester, as look for noble principles in the man whose hopes and fears are all suspended on the present moment, and who stakes the whole hap-

piness of his being on the events of this vain and fleeting life. If he be ever impelled to the performance of great achievements in a good cause, it must be solely by the hope of fame; a motive which, besides that it makes virtue the servant of opinion, usually grows weaker at the approach of death; and which, however it may surmount the love of existence in the heat of battle, or in the moment of public observation, can seldom be expected to operate with much force on the retired duties of a private station.

In affirming that infidelity is unfavourable to the higher class of virtues, we are supported as well by facts as by reasoning. We should be sorry to load our adversaries with unmerited reproach: but to what history, to what record will they appeal for the traits of moral greatness exhibited by their disciples? Where shall we look for the trophies of infidel magnanimity, or atheistical virtue? Not that we mean to accuse them of inactivity: they have recently filled the world with the fame of their exploits; exploits of a different kind indeed, but of imperishable memory, and disastrous lustre.

Though it is confessed great and splendid actions are not the ordinary employment of life, but must, from their nature, be reserved for high and eminent occasions; yet that system is essentially defective which leaves no room for their production. They are important, both from their immediate advantage and their remoter influence. They often save, and always illustrate, the age and nation in which they appear. They raise the standard of morals; they arrest the progress of degeneracy; they diffuse a lustre over the path of life: monuments of the greatness of the human soul, they present to the world the august image of virtue in her sublimest form, from which streams of light and glory issue to remote times and ages; while their commemoration, by the pens of historians and poets, awakens in distant bosoms the sparks of kindred excellence.

Combine the frequent and familiar perpetration of atrocious deeds with the dearth of great and generous actions, and you have the exact picture of that condition

of society which completes the degradation of the species —the frightful contrast of dwarfish virtues and gigantic vices, where every thing good is mean and little, and every thing evil is rank and luxuriant: a dead and sickening uniformity prevails, broken only at intervals by volcanic eruptions of anarchy and crime.

II. Hitherto we have considered the influence of scepticism on the principles of virtue; and have endeavoured to show that it despoils it of its dignity, and lays its authority in the dust. Its influence on the formation of character remains to be examined. The actions of men are oftener determined by their character than their interest; their conduct takes its colour more from their acquired taste, inclinations, and habits, than from a deliberate regard to their greatest good. It is only on great occasions the mind awakes to take an extended survey of her whole course, and that she suffers the dictates of reason to impress a new bias upon her movements. The actions of each day are, for the most part, links which follow each other in the chain of custom. Hence the great effort of practical wisdom is to imbue the mind with right tastes, affections, and habits; the elements of character, and masters of action.

1. The exclusion of a supreme Being, and of a superintending Providence, tends directly to the destruction of moral taste. It robs the universe of all finished and consummate excellence, even in idea. The admiration of perfect wisdom and goodness for which we are formed, and which kindles such unspeakable raptures in the soul, finding in the regions of scepticism nothing to which it corresponds, droops and languishes. In a world which presents a fair spectacle of order and beauty, of a vast family nourished and supported by an almighty Parent: in a world which leads the devout mind, step by step, to the contemplation of the first fair and the first good, the sceptic is encompassed with nothing but obscurity, meanness, and disorder.

When we reflect on the manner in which the idea of Deity is formed, we must be convinced that such an idea,

intimately present to the mind, must have a most powerful effect in refining the moral taste. Composed of the richest elements, it embraces in the character of a beneficent Parent and almighty Ruler, whatever is venerable in wisdom, whatever is awful in authority, whatever is touching in goodness.

Human excellence is blended with many imperfections, and seen under many limitations. It is beheld only in detached and separate portions, nor ever appears in any one character whole and entire. So that when, in imitation of the Stoics, we wish to form out of these fragments the notion of a perfectly wise and good man, we know it is a mere fiction of the mind, without any real being in whom it is embodied and realized. In the belief of a Deity, these conceptions are reduced to reality: the scattered rays of an ideal excellence are concentrated, and become the real attributes of that Being with whom we stand in the nearest relation, who sits supreme at the head of the universe, is armed with infinite power, and pervades all nature with his presence.

The efficacy of these views in producing and augmenting a virtuous taste, will indeed be proportioned to the vividness with which they are formed, and the frequency with which they recur; yet some benefit will not fail to result from them even in their lowest degree.

The idea of the Supreme Being has this peculiar property; that, as it admits of no substitute, so from the first moment it is formed, it is capable of continual growth and enlargement. God himself is immutable; but our conception of his character is continually receiving fresh accessions, is continually growing more extended and refulgent, by having transferred to it new elements of beauty and goodness; by attracting to itself, as a centre, whatever bears the impress of dignity, order, or happiness. It borrows splendour from all that is fair, subordinates to itself all that is great, and sits enthroned on the riches of the universe.

As the object of worship will always be, in a degree, the object of imitation, hence arises a fixed standard of moral excellence; by the contemplation of which the

tendencies to corruption are counteracted, the contagion of bad example is checked, and human nature rises above its natural level.

When the knowledge of God was lost in the world, just ideas of virtue and moral obligation disappeared along with it. How is it to be otherwise accounted for, that in the polished nations, and in the enlightened times, of pagan antiquity, the most unnatural lusts and detestable impurities were not only tolerated in private life,* but entered into religion, and formed a material part of public worship;† while among the Jews, a people so much inferior in every other branch of knowledge, the same vices were regarded with horror?

The reason is this: The true character of God was unknown to the former, which by the light of divine revelation was displayed to the latter. The former cast their deities in the mould of their own imaginations, in consequence of which they partook of the vices and defects of their worshippers. To the latter no scope was left for the wanderings of fancy; but a pure and perfect model was prescribed.

False and corrupt, however, as was the religion of the pagans (if it deserve the name), and defective, and often vicious, as was the character of their imaginary deities, it was still better for the world that the void should be filled up with these than abandoned to a total scepticism; for if both systems are equally false, they are not equally

* It is worthy of observation, that the elegant and philosophic Xenophon, in delineating the model of a perfect prince in the character of Cyrus, introduces a Mede who had formed an unnatural passion for his hero; and relates the incident in a lively, festive humour, without being in the least conscious of any indelicacy attached to it. What must be the state of manners in a country where a circumstance of this kind, feigned, no doubt, by way of ornament, finds a place in such a work? *Cyri Instit.* lib. i.

"Deinde nobis, qui, *concedentibus philosophis antiquis*, adolescentulis delectamur, etiam vitia sæpe jucunda sunt." *Cicero De Nat. Dei*, lib. i.

† "——*Nam quo non prostat fœmina templo?*" Juv.
The impurities practised in the worship of Isis, an Egyptian deity, rose to such a height in the reign of Tiberius, that that profligate prince thought fit to prohibit her worship, and at the same time inflicted on her priests the punishment of crucifixion. *Joseph. Antiq. Judaic.* lib. xviii.

pernicious. When the fictions of heathenism consecrated the memory of its legislators and heroes, it invested them for the most part with those qualities which were in the greatest repute. They were supposed to possess in the highest degree the virtues in which it was most honourable to excel; and to be the witnesses, approvers, and patrons of those perfections in others, by which their own character was chiefly distinguished. Men saw, or rather fancied they saw, in these supposed deities, the qualities they most admired, dilated to a larger size, moving in a higher sphere, and associated with the power, dignity, and happiness of superior natures. With such ideal models before them, and conceiving themselves continually acting under the eye of such spectators and judges, they felt a real elevation; their eloquence became more impassioned, their patriotism inflamed, and their courage exalted.

Revelation, by displaying the true character of God, affords a pure and perfect standard of virtue; heathenism, one in many respects defective and vicious; the fashionable scepticism of the present day, which excludes the belief of all superior powers, affords no standard at all. Human nature knows nothing better or higher than itself. All above and around it being shrouded in darkness, and the prospect confined to the tame realities of life, virtue has no room upwards to expand; nor are any excursions permitted into that unseen world, the true element of the great and good, by which it is fortified with motives equally calculated to satisfy the reason, to delight the fancy, and to impress the heart.

2. Modern infidelity not only tends to corrupt the moral taste; it also promotes the growth of those vices which are the most hostile to social happiness. Of all the vices incident to human nature, the most destructive to society are vanity, ferocity, and unbridled sensuality; and these are precisely the vices which infidelity is calculated to cherish.

That the love, fear, and habitual contemplation of a Being infinitely exalted, or, in other words, devotion, is adapted to promote a sober and moderate estimate of our

own excellencies, is incontestable; nor is it less evident that the exclusion of such sentiments must be favourable to pride. The criminality of pride will, perhaps, be less readily admitted; for though there is no vice so opposite to the spirit of christianity, yet there is none which, even in the christian world, has, under various pretences, been treated with so much indulgence.

There is, it will be confessed, a delicate sensibility to character, a sober desire of reputation, a wish to possess the esteem of the wise and good, felt by the purest minds, which is at the farthest remove from arrogance or vanity. The humility of a noble mind scarcely dares to approve of itself, until it has secured the approbation of others. Very different is that restless desire of distinction, that passion for theatrical display, which inflames the heart and occupies the whole attention of vain men. This, of all the passions, is the most unsocial, avarice itself not excepted. The reason is plain. Property is a kind of good which may be more easily attained, and is capable of more minute subdivisions than fame. In the pursuit of wealth, men are led by an attention to their own interest to promote the welfare of each other; their advantages are reciprocal; the benefits which each is anxious to acquire for himself he reaps in the greatest abundance from the union and conjunction of society. The pursuits of vanity are quite contrary. The portion of time and attention mankind are willing to spare from their avocations and pleasures to devote to the admiration of each other is so small, that every successful adventurer is felt to have impaired the common stock. The success of one is the disappointment of multitudes. For though there be many rich, many virtuous, many wise men, fame must necessarily be the portion of but few. Hence every vain man, every man in whom vanity is the ruling passion, regarding his rival as his enemy, is strongly tempted to rejoice in his miscarriage, and repine at his success.

Besides, as the passions are seldom seen in a simple, unmixed state, so vanity, when it succeeds, degenerates into arrogance; when it is disappointed, (and it is often disappointed,) it is exasperated into malignity, and cor-

rupted into envy. In this stage the vain man commences a determined misanthropist. He detests that excellence which he cannot reach. He detests his species, and longs to be revenged for the unpardonable injustice he has sustained in their insensibility to his merits. He lives upon the calamities of the world; the vices and miseries of men are his element and his food. Virtues, talents, and genius, are his natural enemies, which he persecutes with instinctive eagerness and unrelenting hostility. There are who doubt the existence of such a disposition; but it certainly issues out of the dregs of disappointed vanity: a disease which taints and vitiates the whole character wherever it prevails. It forms the heart to such a profound indifference to the welfare of others, that, whatever appearances he may assume, or however wide the circle of his seeming virtues may extend, you will infallibly find the vain man is his own centre. Attentive only to himself, absorbed in the contemplation of his own perfections, instead of feeling tenderness for his fellow-creatures as members of the same family, as beings with whom he is appointed to act, to suffer, and to sympathize; he considers life as a stage on which he is performing a part, and mankind in no other light than spectators. Whether he smiles or frowns, whether his path is adorned with the rays of beneficence, or his steps are dyed in blood, an attention to self is the spring of every movement, and the motive to which every action is referred.

His apparent good qualities lose all their worth, by losing all that is simple, genuine, and natural; they are even pressed into the service of vanity, and become the means of enlarging its power. The truly good man is jealous over himself lest the notoriety of his best actions, by blending itself with their motive, should diminish their value; the vain man performs the same actions for the sake of that notoriety. The good man quietly discharges his duty, and shuns ostentation; the vain man considers every good deed lost that is not publicly displayed. The one is intent upon realities, the other upon semblances: the one aims to *be* virtuous, the other to *appear* so.

Nor is a mind inflated with vanity more disqualified for right action than just speculation, or better disposed to the pursuit of truth than the practice of virtue. To such a mind the simplicity of truth is disgusting. Careless of the improvement of mankind, and intent only upon astonishing with the appearance of novelty, the glare of paradox will be preferred to the light of truth; opinions will be embraced, not because they are just, but because they are new: the more flagitious, the more subversive of morals, the more alarming to the wise and good, the more welcome to men who estimate their literary powers by the mischief they produce, and who consider the anxiety and terror they impress as the measure of their renown. Truth is simple and uniform, while error may be infinitely varied: and as it is one thing to start paradoxes, and another to make discoveries, we need the less wonder at the prodigious increase of modern philosophers.

We have been so much accustomed to consider extravagant self-estimation merely as a *ridiculous* quality, that many will be surprised to find it treated as a vice pregnant with serious mischief to society. But to form a judgment of its influence on the manners and happiness of a nation, it is necessary only to look at its effects in a family; for bodies of men are only collections of individuals, and the greatest nation is nothing more than an aggregate of a number of families. Conceive of a domestic circle, in which each member is elated with a most extravagant opinion of himself, and a proportionable contempt of every other; is full of little contrivances to catch applause, and whenever he is not praised is sullen and disappointed. What a picture of disunion, disgust, and animosity would such a family present! How utterly would domestic affection be extinguished, and all the purposes of domestic society be defeated! The general prevalence of such dispositions must be accompanied by an equal proportion of general misery. The tendency of pride to produce strife and hatred, is sufficiently apparent from the pains men have been at to construct a system of politeness which is nothing more

than a sort of mimic humility, in which the sentiments of an offensive self-estimation are so far disguised and suppressed as to make them compatible with the spirit of society; such a mode of behaviour as would naturally result from an attention to the apostolic injunction: *Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves.* But if the semblance be of such importance, how much more useful the reality! If the mere garb of humility be of such indispensable necessity that without it society could not subsist, how much better still would the harmony of the world be preserved, were the condescension, deference, and respect, so studiously displayed, a true picture of the heart!

The same restless and eager vanity which disturbs a family, when it is permitted in a great national crisis to mingle with political affairs, distracts a kingdom; infusing into those intrusted with the enaction of laws, a spirit of rash innovation and daring empiricism, a disdain of the established usages of mankind, a foolish desire to dazzle the world with new and untried systems of policy, in which the precedents of antiquity and the experience of ages are only consulted to be trodden under foot; and into the executive department of government, a fierce contention for pre-eminence, an incessant struggle to supplant and destroy, with a propensity to calumny and suspicion, proscription and massacre.

We shall suffer the most eventful season ever witnessed in the affairs of men to pass over our heads to very little purpose, if we fail to learn from it some useful lessons on the nature and progress of the passions. The true light in which the French revolution ought to be contemplated is that of a grand experiment on human nature. Among the various passions which that revolution has so strikingly displayed, none is more conspicuous than vanity; nor is it less difficult, without adverting to the national character of the people, to account for its extraordinary predominance. Political power, the most seducing object of ambition, never before circulated through so many hands; the prospect of possessing it

was never before presented to many minds. Multitudes, who, by their birth and education, and not unfrequently by their talents, seemed destined to perpetual obscurity, were, by the alternate rise and fall of parties, elevated into distinction, and shared in the functions of government. The short-lived forms of power and office glided with such rapidity through successive ranks of degradation, from the court to the very dregs of the populace, that they seemed rather to solicit acceptance than to be a prize contended for.* Yet, as it was still impossible for all to possess authority, though none were willing to obey, a general impatience to break the ranks and rush into the foremost ground, maddened and infuriated the nation, and overwhelmed law, order, and civilization, with the violence of a torrent.

If such be the mischiefs both in public and private life resulting from an excessive self-estimation, it remains next to be considered whether Providence has supplied any medicine to correct it; for as the reflection on excellencies, whether real or imaginary, is always attended with pleasure to the possessor, it is a disease deeply seated in our nature.

Suppose there were a great and glorious Being always present with us, who had given us existence, with numberless other blessings, and on whom we depended each instant, as well for every present enjoyment as for every future good: suppose, again, we had incurred the just displeasure of such a Being by ingratitude and disobedience, yet that in great mercy he had not cast us off, but had assured us he was willing to pardon and restore us on our humble entreaty and sincere repentance; say, would not an habitual sense of the presence of this Being, self-reproach for having displeased him, and an anxiety to recover his favour, be the most effectual antidote to pride? But such are the leading discoveries made by the christian revelation, and such the dispositions which a practical belief of it inspires.

Humility is the first fruit of religion. In the mouth

* ——— "Æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres." *Hor.*

of our Lord there is no maxim so frequent as the following: *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Religion, and that alone, teaches *absolute* humility; by which I mean a sense of our *absolute* nothingness in the view of infinite greatness and excellence. That sense of inferiority which results from the comparison of men with each other is often a disagreeable sentiment forced upon the mind, which may rather embitter the temper than soften it: that which devotion impresses is soothing and delightful. The devout man loves to lie low at the footstool of his Creator, because it is then he attains the most lively perceptions of the divine excellence, and the most tranquil confidence in the divine favour. In so august a presence he sees all distinctions lost, and all beings reduced to the same level. He looks at his superiors without envy, and his inferiors without contempt: and when from this elevation he descends to mix in society, the conviction of superiority, which must in many instances be felt, is a calm inference of the understanding, and no longer a busy, importunate passion of the heart.

The wicked (says the Psalmist) *through the pride of their countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all their thoughts.* When we consider the incredible vanity of the atheistical sect, together with the settled malignity and unrelenting rancour with which they pursue every vestige of religion, is it uncandid to suppose that its humbling tendency is one principal cause of their enmity; that they are eager to displace a Deity from the minds of men, that they may occupy the void; to crumble the throne of the Eternal into dust, that they may elevate themselves on its ruins; and that, as their licentiousness is impatient of restraint, so their pride disdains a superior?

We mentioned a ferocity of character as one effect of sceptical impiety. It is an inconvenience attending a controversy with those with whom we have few principles in common, that we are often in danger of reasoning inconclusively, for the want of its being clearly known and settled what our opponents admit, and what they deny.

The persons, for example, with whom we are at present engaged, have discarded humility and modesty from the catalogue of virtues; on which account we have employed the more time in evincing their importance: but whatever may be thought of humility as a *virtue*, it surely will not be denied that inhumanity is a most detestable *vice;* a vice, however, which scepticism has a most powerful tendency to inflame.

As we have already shown that pride hardens the heart, and that religion is the only effectual antidote, the connexion between irreligion and inhumanity is in this view obvious. But there is another light in which this part of the subject may be viewed, in my humble opinion, much more important, though seldom adverted to. The supposition that man is a moral and accountable being, destined to survive the stroke of death, and to live in a future world in a never-ending state of happiness or misery, makes him a creature of incomparably more *consequence* than the opposite supposition. When we consider him as placed here by an Almighty Ruler in a state of probation, and that the present life is his period of trial, the first link in a vast and interminable chain which stretches into eternity, he assumes a dignified character in our eyes. Every thing which relates to him becomes interesting; and to trifle with his happiness is felt to be the most unpardonable levity. If such be the destination of man, it is evident that in the qualities which fit him for it, his principal dignity consists: his moral greatness is his true greatness. Let the sceptical principles be admitted, which represent him, on the contrary, as the offspring of chance, connected with no superior power, and sinking into annihilation at death, and he is a contemptible creature, whose existence and happiness are insignificant. The characteristic difference is lost betwixt him and the brute creation, from which he is no longer distinguished, except by the vividness and multiplicity of his perceptions.

If we reflect on that part of our nature which disposes us to humanity, we shall find that, where we have no particular attachment, our sympathy with the sufferings

and concern for the destruction, of sensitive beings, are in proportion to their supposed importance in the general scale; or, in other words, to their supposed capacity of enjoyment. We feel, for example, much more at witnessing the destruction of a man than of an inferior animal, because we consider it as involving the extinction of a much greater sum of happiness. For the same reason, he who would shudder at the slaughter of a large animal, will see a thousand insects perish without a pang. Our sympathy with the calamities of our fellow-creatures is adjusted to the same proportions; for we feel more powerfully affected with the distress of fallen greatness than with equal or greater distresses sustained by persons of inferior rank; because, having been accustomed to associate with an elevated station, the idea of superior happiness, the loss appears the greater, and the wreck more extensive. But the disproportion in importance betwixt man and the meanest insect, is not so great as that which subsists betwixt man considered as *mortal* and as *immortal;* that is, betwixt man as he is represented by the system of scepticism, and that of divine revelation: for the enjoyment of the meanest insect bears some proportion, though a very small one, to the present happiness of man; but the happiness of time bears none at all to that of eternity. The sceptical system, therefore, sinks the importance of human existence to an inconceivable degree.

From these principles results the following important inference—that to extinguish human life by the hand of violence, must be quite a different thing in the eyes of a sceptic from what it is in those of a christian. With the sceptic it is nothing more than diverting the course of a little red fluid, called blood; it is merely lessening the number by one of many millions of fugitive contemptible creatures. The christian sees in the same event an accountable being cut off from a state of probation, and hurried, perhaps unprepared, into the presence of his Judge, to hear that final, that irrevocable sentence, which is to fix him for ever in an unalterable condition of felicity or woe. The former perceives in death nothing

but its physical circumstances; the latter is impressed with the magnitude of its moral consequences. It is the moral relation which man is supposed to bear to a superior power, the awful idea of accountability, the influence which his present dispositions and actions are conceived to have upon his eternal destiny, more than any superiority of intellectual powers abstracted from these considerations, which invest him with such mysterious grandeur, and constitute the firmest guard on the sanctuary of human life. This reasoning, it is true, serves more *immediately* to show how the disbelief of a future state endangers the security of life; but, though this be its *direct* consequence, it extends by analogy much further, since he who has learned to sport with the *lives* of his fellow-creatures will feel but little solicitude for their welfare in any other instance; but, as the greater includes the less, will easily pass from this to all the inferior gradations of barbarity.

As the advantage of the armed over the unarmed is not seen till the moment of attack, so in that tranquil state of society in which law and order maintain their ascendency, it is not perceived, perhaps not even suspected, to what an alarming degree the principles of modern infidelity leave us naked and defenceless. But let the state be convulsed, let the mounds of regular authority be once overflowed, and the still small voice of law drowned in the tempest of popular fury (events which recent experience shows to be possible), it will then be seen that atheism is a school of ferocity; and that, having taught its disciples to consider mankind as little better than a nest of insects, they will be prepared in the fierce conflicts of party to trample upon them without pity, and extinguish them without remorse.

It was late* before the atheism of Epicurus gained footing at Rome; but its prevalence was soon followed by such scenes of proscription, confiscation, and blood, as were *then* unparalleled in the history of the world; from

* "Neque enim assentior iis qui *hæc nuper* disserere cœperunt, cum corporibus simul animos interire atque omnia morte deleri." *Cicero de Amicitia.*

which the republic, being never able to recover itself, after many unsuccessful struggles, exchanged liberty for repose, by submission to absolute power. Such were the effects of atheism at Rome. An attempt has been recently made to establish a similar system in France, the consequences of which are too well known to render it requisite for me to shock your feelings by a recital. The only doubt that can arise is, whether the barbarities which have stained the revolution in that unhappy country are justly chargeable on the prevalence of atheism. Let those who doubt of this, recollect that the men who, by their activity and talents, prepared the minds of the people for that great change—*Voltaire*, *D'Alembert*, *Diderot*, *Rousseau*, and others, were avowed enemies of revelation; that in all their writings the diffusion of scepticism and revolutionary principles went hand in hand; that the fury of the most sanguinary parties was especially pointed against the christian priesthood and religious institutions, without once pretending, like other persecutors, to execute the vengeance of God (whose name they never mentioned) upon his enemies; that their atrocities were committed with a wanton levity and brutal merriment; that the reign of atheism was avowedly and expressly the reign of terror; that in the full madness of their career, in the highest climax of their horrors, they shut up the temples of God, abolished his worship, and proclaimed death to be an eternal sleep; as if, by pointing to the silence of the sepulchre, and the sleep of the dead, these ferocious barbarians meant to apologize for leaving neither sleep, quiet, nor repose to the living.

As the infidels fabled that Minerva issued full armed from the head of Jupiter, no sooner were the speculations of atheistical philosophy matured, than they gave birth to a ferocity which converted the most polished people in Europe into a horde of assassins; the seat of voluptuous refinement, of pleasure, and of arts, into a theatre of blood.

Having already shown that the principles of infidelity facilitate the commission of crimes, by removing the

restraints of fear; and that they foster the arrogance of the individual, while they inculcate the most despicable opinion of the species; the inevitable result is, that a haughty self-confidence, a contempt of mankind, together with a daring defiance of religious restraints, are the natural ingredients of the atheistical character; nor is it less evident that these are, of all others, the dispositions which most forcibly stimulate to violence and cruelty.

Settle it therefore in your minds, as a maxim never to be effaced or forgotten, that atheism is an inhuman, bloody, ferocious system, equally hostile to every useful restraint, and to every virtuous affection; that leaving nothing above us to excite awe, nor round us to awaken tenderness, it wages war with heaven and earth: its first object is to dethrone God, its next to destroy man.*

There is a third vice, not less destructive to society than either of those which have been already mentioned, to which the system of modern infidelity is favourable; that is, unbridled sensuality, the licentious and unrestrained indulgence of those passions which are essential to the continuation of the species. The magnitude of these passions, and their supreme importance to the existence as well as the peace and welfare of society, have rendered it one of the first objects of solicitude with every wise legislator, to restrain them by such laws, and to confine their indulgence within such limits, as shall best promote the great ends for which they were implanted.

The benevolence and wisdom of the Author of Christianity are eminently conspicuous in the laws he has enacted on this branch of morals; for, while he authorizes marriage, he restrains the vagrancy and caprice of the passions, by forbidding polygamy and divorce; and, well knowing that offences against the laws of chastity usually spring from an ill-regulated imagination, he in-

* As human nature is the same in all ages, it is not surprising to find the same moral systems, even in the most dissimilar circumstances produce corresponding effects. Josephus remarks that the Sadducees, a kind of Jewish infidels, whose tenets were the denial of a moral government and a future state, were distinguished from the other sects by their ferocity. *De Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. He elsewhere remarks, that they were eminent for their inhumanity in their judicial capacity.

culcates purity of heart. Among innumerable benefits which the world has derived from the christian religion, a superior refinement in the sexual sentiments, a more equal and respectful treatment of women, greater dignity and permanence conferred on the institution of marriage, are not the least considerable; in consequence of which the purest affections, and the most sacred duties, are grafted on the stock of the strongest instincts.

The aim of all the leading champions of infidelity is to rob mankind of these benefits, and throw them back into a state of gross and brutal sensuality. In this spirit, Mr. HUME represents the private conduct of the profligate CHARLES, whose debaucheries polluted the age, as a just subject of panegyric. A disciple in the same school has lately had the unblushing effrontery to stigmatize marriage as the worst of all monopolies; and, in a narrative of his licentious amours, to make a formal apology for departing from his principles, by submitting to its restraints. The popular productions on the continent, which issue from the atheistical school, are incessantly directed to the same purpose.

Under every possible aspect in which infidelity can be viewed, it extends the dominion of sensuality: it repeals and abrogates every law by which divine revelation has, under such awful sanctions, restrained the indulgence of the passions. The disbelief of a supreme, omniscient Being, which it inculcates, releases its disciples from an attention to the *heart*, from every care but the preservation of outward decorum: and the exclusion of the devout affections, and an unseen world, leaves the mind immersed in visible, sensible objects.

There are two sorts of pleasures, corporeal and mental. Though we are indebted to the senses for all our perceptions *originally*, yet those which are at the farthest remove from their *immediate impressions* confer the most elevation on the character; since, in proportion as they are multiplied and augmented, the slavish subjection to the senses is subdued. Hence the true and only antidote to debasing sensuality is the possession of a fund of that *kind of enjoyment* which is independent of

the corporeal appetites. Inferior in the perfection of several of his senses to different parts of the brute creation, the superiority of man over them all consists in his superior power of multiplying by new combinations his mental perceptions, and thereby of creating to himself resources of happiness separate from external sensation. In the scale of enjoyment, at the first remove from sense are the pleasures of reason and society; at the next are the pleasures of devotion and religion. The former, though totally distinct from those of sense, are yet less perfectly adapted to moderate their excesses than the last, as they are in a great measure conversant with visible and sensible objects.—The religious affections and sentiments are, in fact, and were intended to be, the *proper antagonist* of sensuality: the great deliverer from the thraldom of the appetites, by opening a spiritual world, and inspiring hopes and fears, and consolations and joys, which bear no relation to the material and sensible universe. The criminal indulgence of sensual passions admits but of two modes of prevention; the establishment of such laws and maxims in society as shall render lewd profligacy impracticable or infamous, or the infusion of such principles and habits as shall render it distasteful. Human legislatures have encountered the disease in the first, the truths and sanctions of revealed religion in the last, of these methods: to both of which the advocates of modern infidelity are equally hostile.

So much has been said by many able writers to evince the inconceivable benefit of the marriage institution, that to hear it seriously attacked by men who style themselves philosophers, at the close of the eighteenth century, must awaken indignation and surprise. The object of this discourse leads us to direct our attention particularly to the influence of this institution on the *civilization* of the world.

From the records of revelation we learn that marriage, or the *permanent union* of the sexes, was ordained by God, and existed, under different modifications, in the early infancy of mankind, without which they could

never have emerged from barbarism. For, conceive only what eternal discord, jealousy, and violence would ensue, were the objects of the tenderest affections secured to their possessor by no law or tie of moral obligation: were domestic enjoyments disturbed by incessant fear, and licentiousness inflamed by hope. Who could find sufficient tranquillity of mind to enable him to plan or execute any continued scheme of action, or what room for arts, or sciences, or religion, or virtue, in that state in which the chief earthly happiness was exposed to every lawless invader; where one was racked with an incessant anxiety to keep what the other was equally eager to acquire? It is not probable in itself, independent of the light of Scripture, that the benevolent Author of the human race ever placed them in so wretched a condition at first: it is certain they could not remain in it long, without being exterminated. Marriage, by shutting out these evils, and enabling every man to rest secure in his enjoyments, is the great civilizer of the world: with this security the mind is at liberty to expand in generous affections, and has leisure to look abroad, and engage in the pursuits of knowledge, science, and virtue.

Nor is it in this way only that marriage institutions are essential to the welfare of mankind. They are sources of tenderness, as well as the guardians of peace. Without the permanent union of the sexes, there can be no permanent families: the dissolution of nuptial ties involves the dissolution of domestic society. But domestic society is the seminary of social affections, the cradle of sensibility, where the first elements are acquired of that tenderness and humanity which cement mankind together; and, were they entirely extinguished, the whole fabric of social institutions would be dissolved.

Families are so many centres of attraction, which preserve mankind from being scattered and dissipated by the repulsive powers of selfishness. The order of nature is evermore from particulars to generals. As in the operations of intellect we proceed from the contem-

plation of individuals to the formation of general abstractions, so in the development of the passions in like manner, we advance from private to public affections; from the love of parents, brothers, and sisters, to those more expanded regards which embrace the immense society of human kind.*

In order to render men benevolent, they must first be made tender: for benevolent affections are not the offspring of reasoning; they result from that culture of the heart, from those early impressions of tenderness, gratitude, and sympathy, which the endearments of domestic life are sure to supply, and for the formation of which it is the best possible school.

The advocates of infidelity invert this eternal order of nature. Instead of inculcating the private affections, as a discipline by which the mind is prepared for those of a more public nature, they set them in direct opposition to each other, they propose to build general benevolence on the destruction of individual tenderness, and to make us love the whole species more by loving every particular part of it less. In pursuit of this chimerical project, gratitude, humility, conjugal, parental, and filial affection, together with every other social disposition, are reprobated—virtue is limited to a passionate attachment to the general good. Is it not natural to ask, when all the tenderness of life is extinguished, and all the bands of society are untwisted, from whence this ardent affection for the general good is to spring?

When this savage philosophy has completed its work, when it has taught its disciple to look with perfect indifference on the offspring of his body, and the wife of his bosom, to estrange himself from his friends, insult his benefactors, and silence the pleadings of gratitude and pity; will he, by thus divesting himself of all that is human, be better prepared for the disinterested

* "Arctior vero colligatio est societatis propinquorum: ab illa enim immensa societate humani generis, in exiguum angustumque concluditur. Nam cum sit hoc natura commune animantium, ut habeant lubidinem procreandi, prima societas in ipso conjugio est; proxima in liberis; deinde una domus, communia omnia. Id autem est principium urbis, et quasi seminarium reipublicæ."—*Cic. de Off.* lib. i. cap. 17

love of his species? Will he become a philanthropist only because he has ceased to be a man? Rather, in this total exemption from all the feelings which humanize and soften, in this chilling frost of universal indifference, may we not be certain that selfishness, unmingled and uncontrolled, will assume the empire of his heart; and that, under pretence of advancing the general good, an object to which the fancy may give innumerable shapes, he will be prepared for the violation of every duty, and the perpetration of every crime? Extended benevolence is the last and most perfect fruit of the private affections; so that to expect to reap the former from the extinction of the latter, is to oppose the means to the end; is as absurd as to attempt to reach the summit of the highest mountain without passing through the intermediate spaces, or to hope to attain the heights of science by forgetting the first elements of knowledge. These absurdities have sprung, however, in the advocates of infidelity, from an ignorance of human nature, sufficient to disgrace even those who did not style themselves philosophers. Presuming, contrary to the experience of every moment, that the affections are awakened by *reasoning*, and perceiving that the general good is an incomparably greater object *in itself* than the happiness of any limited number of individuals, they inferred nothing more was necessary than to exhibit it in its just dimensions, to draw the *affections* towards it; as though the fact of the superior populousness of China to Great Britain needed but to be known, to render us indifferent to our domestic concerns, and lead us to direct all our anxiety to the prosperity of that vast but remote empire.

It is not the province of reason to awaken new passions, or open new sources of sensibility; but to direct us in the attainment of those objects which nature has already rendered pleasing, or to determine, among the interfering inclinations and passions which sway the mind, which are the fittest to be preferred.

Is a regard to the general good, then, you will reply, to be excluded from the motives of action? Nothing

is more remote from my intention: but as the nature of this motive has, in my opinion, been much misunderstood by some good men, and abused by others, of a different description, to the worst of purposes, permit me to declare, in a few words, what appears to me to be the truth on this subject.

The welfare of the whole system of being, must be allowed to be, in itself, the object of all others the most worthy of being pursued; so that, could the mind distinctly embrace it, and discern at every step *what action* would infallibly promote it, we should be furnished with a sure criterion of right and wrong, an unerring guide, which would supersede the use and necessity ot all inferior rules, laws, and principles.

But this being impossible, since the good of the *whole* is a motive so loose and indeterminate, and embraces such an infinity of relations, that before we could be certain what action it prescribed, the season of action would be past; to weak, short-sighted mortals, Providence has assigned a sphere of agency, less grand and extensive indeed, but better suited to their limited powers, by implanting certain *affections* which it is their duty to cultivate, and suggesting particular rules to which they are bound to conform. By these provisions the boundaries of virtue are easily ascertained, at the same time that its ultimate object, the good of the whole, is secured; for, since the happiness of the entire system results from the happiness of the several parts, the affections, which confine the attention *immediately* to the latter, conspire in the end to the promotion of the former; as the labourer, whose industry is limited to a corner of a large building, performs his part towards rearing the structure much more effectually than if he extended his care to the whole.

As the interest, however, of any limited number of persons may not only not contribute, but may possibly be directly opposed to the general good (the interest of a family, for example, to that of a province, or of a nation to that of the world), Providence has so ordered it, that in a well-regulated mind, there springs up. as we have

already seen, besides particular attachments, *an extended regard to the species*, whose office is two-fold: not to *destroy* and *extinguish* the more private affections, which is mental parricide; but first, as far as is consistent with the claims of those who are immediately committed to our care, *to do good to all men;* secondly, to exercise a jurisdiction and control over the private affections, so as to prohibit their indulgence, whenever it would be attended with *manifest detriment* to the whole. Thus every part of our nature is brought into action; all the practical principles of the human heart find an element to move in, each in its different sort and manner conspiring, without mutual collisions, to maintain the harmony of the world and the happiness of the universe.*

* It is somewhat singular, that many of the fashionable infidels have hit upon a definition of virtue which perfectly coincides with that of certain metaphysical divines in America, first invented and defended by that most acute reasoner, JONATHAN EDWARDS. They both place virtue exclusively in a passion for the general good; or, as Mr. Edwards expresses it, *love to being in general;* so that our love is always to be proportioned to the magnitude of its object in the scale of being: which is liable to the objections I have already stated, as well as to many others which the limits of this note will not permit me to enumerate. Let it suffice to remark, (1.) That virtue, on these principles, is an utter impossibility: for the system of being, comprehending the great Supreme, is *infinite*,—and therefore, to maintain the proper proportion, the force of particular attachment must be infinitely less than the passion for the general good; but the limits of the human mind are not capable of any emotion so infinitely different *in degree*. (2.) Since *our views* of the extent of the universe are capable of perpetual enlargement, admitting the sum of existence is ever the same, we must return back at each step to diminish the strength of particular affections, or they will become disproportionate; and consequently, on these principles, vicious; so that the balance must be continually fluctuating, by the weights being taken out of one scale and put into the other. (3.) If virtue consist *exclusively* in love to being in general, or attachment to the general good, the particular affections are, to every purpose of virtue, useless, and even pernicious; for their immediate, nay, their necessary tendency is to attract to their objects a proportion of attention which far exceeds their comparative value in the general scale. To allege that the *general good* is promoted by them, will be of no advantage to the defence of this system, but the contrary, by confessing that a greater sum of happiness is attained by a deviation from, than an adherence to, its principles; unless its advocates mean by the love of being in general the same thing as the private affections, which is to confound all the distinctions of language, as well as all the operations of mind. Let it be remembered, we have no dispute respecting what is the ultimate end

Before I close this discourse, I cannot omit to mention three circumstances attending the propagation of infidelity by its present abettors, equally new and alarming.

1. It is the first attempt which has been ever witnessed, on an extensive scale, to establish *the principles of atheism;* the first effort which history has recorded to disannul and extinguish the belief of all superior powers; the consequence of which, should it succeed, would be to place mankind in a situation never before experienced, not even during the ages of pagan darkness. The system of polytheism was as remote from modern infidelity as from true religion. Amidst that rubbish of superstition, the product of fear, ignorance, and vice, which had been accumulating for ages, some faint embers of sacred truth remained unextinguished; the interposition of unseen powers in the affairs of men was believed and revered, the sanctity of oaths was maintained, the idea of *revelation* and of *tradition*, as a source of religious knowledge, was familiar; a useful persuasion of the existence

of virtue, which is allowed on both sides to be the greatest sum of happiness in the universe. The question is merely what is *virtue itself*: or, in other words, what are the means appointed for the attainment of that end?

There is little doubt, from some parts of Mr. Godwin's work, entitled, "Political Justice," as well as from his early habits of reading, that he was indebted to Mr. Edwards for his principal arguments against the private affections; though, with a daring consistency, he has pursued his principles to an extreme from which that most excellent man would have revolted with horror. The fundamental error of the whole system arose, as I conceive, from a mistaken pursuit of simplicity: from a wish to construct a moral system, without leaving sufficient scope for the infinite variety of moral phenomena and mental combination; in consequence of which its advocates were induced to place virtue *exclusively* in some *one disposition* of mind: and since the passion for the general good is undeniably the *noblest* and most extensive of all others, when it was once resolved to place virtue in any *one thing*, there remained little room to hesitate which should be preferred. It might have been worth while to reflect, that in the natural world there are two kinds of attraction; one, which holds the several *parts* of individual bodies in contact; another, which maintains the union of bodies themselves with the general system: and that, though the union in the former case is more *intimate* than in the latter, each is equally essential to the order of the world. Similar to this is the relation which the public and private affections bear to each other, and their use in the moral system.

of a future world was kept alive, and the greater gods were looked up to as the guardians of the public welfare, the patrons of those virtues which promote the prosperity of states, and the avengers of injustice, perfidy, and fraud.*

* The testimony of Polybius to the beneficial effects which resulted from the system of pagan superstition, in fortifying the sentiments of moral obligation, and supporting the sanctity of oaths, is so weighty and decisive, that it would be an injustice to the subject not to insert it; more especially as it is impossible to attribute it to the influence of credulity on the author himself, who was evidently a sceptic. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that all the benefits which might in any way flow from superstition, are secured to an incomparably greater degree by the belief of true religion.

"But among all the useful institutions (says Polybius) that demonstrate the superior excellence of the Roman government, the most considerable, perhaps is the opinion which people are taught to hold concerning the gods: and that which other men regard as an object of disgrace, appears, in my judgment, to be the very thing by which this republic is chiefly sustained. I mean superstition, which is impressed with all its terrors, and influences the private actions of the citizens and the public administration of the state, to a degree that can scarcely be exceeded.

"The ancients, therefore, acted not absurdly, nor without good reason, when they inculcated the notions concerning the gods, and the belief of infernal punishments; but much rather *are those of the present age to be charged with rashness and absurdity,* in endeavouring to extirpate these opinions; for, not to mention other effects that flow from such an institution, if among the Greeks, for example, a single talent only be entrusted to those who have the management of any of the public money, though they give ten written sureties, with as many seals, and twice as many witnesses, they are unable to discharge the trust reposed in them with integrity. But the Romans, on the other hand, who in the course of their magistracies and in embassies disburse the greatest sums, are prevailed on, by the single obligation of an oath, to perform their duty with inviolable honesty And, as in other states, a man is rarely to be found whose hands are pure from public robbery, so among the Romans it is no less rare to discover one that is tainted with this crime."—*Hampton's Polybius,* Vol. III. book vi.

Though the system of paganism is justly condemned by reason and scripture, yet it assumed as true several principles of the first importance to the preservation of public manners; such as a persuasion of invisible power, of the folly of incurring the divine vengeance for the attainment of any present advantage, and the divine approbation of virtue: so that, strictly speaking, it was the mixture of truth in it which gave it all its utility, which is well stated by the *great and judicious* Hooker in treating on this subject. "Seeing, therefore, it doth thus appear, (says that venerable author,) that the safety of all states dependeth upon religion: that religion, unfeignedly loved, perfecteth men's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth; that

Of whatever benefit superstition might formerly be productive, by the scattered particles of truth which it contained, these advantages can now only be reaped from the soil of true religion; nor is there any other alternative left than the belief of Christianity, or absolute atheism. In the revolutions of the human mind, exploded *opinions* are often revived; but an exploded superstition never recovers its credit. The pretension to divine revelation is so august and commanding, that when its falsehood is once discerned, it is covered with all the ignominy of detected imposture; it falls from such a height (to change the figure), that it is inevitably crumbled into atoms. Religions, whether false or true, are not creatures of arbitrary institution. After discrediting the principles of piety, should our modern free-thinkers find it necessary, in order to restrain the excesses of ferocity, to seek for a substitute in some popular superstition, it will prove a vain and impracticable attempt: they may recall the names, restore the altars, and revive the ceremonies; but to rekindle the spirit of heathenism will exceed their power; because it is impossible to enact ignorance by law, or to repeal by legislative authority the dictates of reason and the light of science.

2. The efforts of infidels to diffuse the principles of infidelity among the common people, is another alarming symptom peculiar to the present time. HUME, BOLINGBROKE, and GIBBON, addressed themselves solely to the more polished classes of the community, and would have thought their refined speculations debased by an attempt to enlist disciples from among the populace. Infidelity has lately grown condescending; bred in the speculations of a daring philosophy, immured at first in the cloisters

men's desire is, in general, to hold no religion but the true; and that whatever good effects do grow out of their religion, who embrace, instead of the true, a false, the roots thereof are certain sparks of the light of truth intermingled with the darkness of error; because no religion can wholly and only consist of untruths, we have reason to think that all true virtues are to honour *true religion* as their parent, and all well ordered commonweals to love her as their chiefest stay." —*Eccles. Pol.* book v.

of the learned, and afterwards nursed in the lap of voluptuousness and of courts; having at length reached its full maturity, it boldly ventures to challenge the suffrages of the people, solicits the acquaintance of peasants and mechanics, and seeks to draw whole nations to its standard.

It is not difficult to account for this new state of things. While infidelity was rare, it was employed as the instrument of literary vanity; its wide diffusion having disqualified it for answering that purpose, it is now adopted as the organ of political convulsion. Literary distinction is conferred by the approbation of a few; but the total subversion and overthrow of society demand the concurrence of millions.

3. The infidels of the present day are the first sophists who have presumed to innovate in the very *substance* of morals. The disputes on moral questions, hitherto agitated amongst philosophers, have respected the *grounds* of duty, not the *nature of duty itself;* or they have been merely metaphysical, and related to the *history* of moral sentiments in the mind, the sources and principles from which they were most easily deduced; they never turned on the quality of those dispositions and actions which were to be denominated virtuous. In the firm persuasion that the love and fear of the Supreme Being, the sacred observation of promises and oaths, reverence to magistrates, obedience to parents, gratitude to benefactors, conjugal fidelity, and parental tenderness, were primary virtues, and the chief support of every commonwealth, they were unanimous. The curse denounced upon such as remove ancient land-marks, upon those who call good evil, and evil good, put light for darkness, and darkness for light, who employ their faculties to subvert the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, and thus to poison the streams of virtue at their source, falls with accumulated weight on the advocates of modern infidelity, and on them alone.

Permit me to close this discourse with a few serious reflections.—There is much, it must be confessed, in the

apostacy of multitudes, and the rapid progress of infidelity, to awaken our fears for the virtue of the rising generation; but nothing to shake our faith; nothing which scripture itself does not give us room to expect. The features which compose the character of apostates, their profaneness, presumption, lewdness, impatience of subordination, restless appetite for change, vain pretensions to freedom and to emancipate the world, while themselves are the slaves of lust, the weapons with which they attack Christianity, and the snares they spread for the unwary, are depicted in the clearest colours by the pencil of prophecy: *Knowing this first* (says Peter), *that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.** In the same epistle he more fully describes the persons he alludes to; *as chiefly them which walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities; sporting themselves in their own deceivings, having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error; while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.*† Of the same characters Jude admonishes us *to remember that they were foretold as mockers, who should be in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they* (he adds) *who separate themselves* (by apostasy), *sensual, not having the Spirit.* Infidelity is an evil of short duration. "*It has* (as a judicious writer observes) *no individual subsistence given it in the system of prophecy. It is not a* BEAST; *but a mere putrid excrescence of the papal beast: an excrescence which though it may diffuse death through every vein of the body on which it grew, yet shall die along with it.*"‡ Its enormities will hasten its overthrow. It is impossible that a

* 2 Pet. iii. 3. † 2 Pet. ii. 10, &c.

‡ See an excellent work, by the Rev. Andrew Fuller, entitled, "The Gospel its own Witness." This valuable piece is reprinted in

system which, by vilifying every virtue, and embracing the patronage of almost every vice and crime, wages war with all the order and civilization of the world; which, equal to the establishment of nothing, is armed only with the energies of destruction, can long retain an ascendency. It is in no shape formed for perpetuity. Sudden in its rise, and impetuous in its progress, it resembles a mountain torrent, which is loud, filthy, and desolating: but, being fed by no perennial spring, is soon drained off, and disappears. By permitting to a certain extent the prevalence of infidelity, Providence is preparing new triumphs for religion. In asserting its authority, the preachers of the gospel have hitherto found it necessary to weigh the prospects of immortality against the interests of time; to strip the world of its charms, to insist on the deceitfulness of pleasure, the unsatisfying nature of riches, the emptiness of grandeur, and the nothingness of a mere worldly life. Topics of this nature will always have their use; but it is not by such representations alone that the importance of religion is evinced. The prevalence of impiety has armed us with new weapons in its defence.

Religion being primarily intended to make men *wise unto salvation*, the support it ministers to social order, the stability it confers on government and laws, is a *subordinate species* of advantage which we should have continued to enjoy, without reflecting on its cause, but for the development of deistical principles, and the experiment which has been made of their effects in a neighbouring country. It had been the constant boast of infidels, that their system, more liberal and generous than Christianity, needed but to be tried to produce an immense accession of human happiness; and christian nations, careless and supine, retaining little of religion but the profession, and disgusted with its restraints, lent a favourable ear to these pretensions. God permitted the trial to be made. In one country, and that the centre of christendom, revelation under-

vol. i. of the uniform edition of Mr. Fuller's Works, now publishing by his son, Mr. A. G. Fuller.—Ed.

went a total eclipse,* while atheism, performing on a darkened theatre its strange and fearful tragedy, confounded the first elements of society, blended every age, rank, and sex, in indiscriminate proscription and massacre, and convulsed all Europe to its centre; that the imperishable memorial of these events might teach the last generations of mankind to consider religion as the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order, which alone has power to curb the fury of the passions, and secure to every one his rights; to the laborious the reward of their industry, to the rich the enjoyment of their wealth, to nobles the preservation of their honours, and to princes the stability of their thrones.

We might ask the patrons of infidelity what fury impels them to attempt the subversion of Christianity? Is it that they have discovered a better system? To what virtues are their principles favourable? Or is there one which Christians have not carried to a higher perfection than any of which their party can boast? Have they discovered a more excellent rule of life, or a better hope in death, than that which the Scriptures suggest? Above all, what are the pretensions on which they rest their claims to be the guides of mankind; or which embolden them to expect we should trample upon the experience of ages, and abandon a religion which has been attested by a train of miracles and prophecies, in which millions of our forefathers have found a refuge in every trouble, and consolation in the hour of death: a religion which has been adorned with the highest sanctity of character and splendor of talents, which enrols amongst its disciples the names of Bacon, Newton, and Locke. the glory of their species, and to which these illus-

* It is worthy of attention that Mercier, a warm advocate of the French Revolution, and a professed deist, in his recent work, entitled, "New Paris," acknowledges and laments the extinction of religion in France. "*We have,*" says he, "*in proscribing superstition, destroyed all religious sentiment; but this is not the way to regenerate the world.*" See Appendix to the 30th vol. of the Monthly Review.

trious men were proud to dedicate the last and best fruits of their immortal genius?

If the question at issue is to be decided by argument, nothing can be added to the triumph of Christianity; if by an appeal to authority, what have our adversaries to oppose to these great names? Where are the infidels of such pure, uncontaminated morals, unshaken probity, and extended benevolence, that we should be in danger of being seduced into impiety by their example? Into what obscure recesses of misery, into what dungeons, have their philanthropists penetrated, to lighten the fetters and relieve the sorrows of the helpless captive? What barbarous tribes have their apostles visited: what distant climes have *they* explored, encompassed with cold, nakedness, and want, to diffuse principles of virtue, and the blessings of civilization? Or will they rather choose to waive their pretensions to this extraordinary, and in their eyes, eccentric species of benevolence, (for infidels, we know, are sworn enemies to enthusiasm of every sort,) and rest their character on their political exploits; on their efforts to reanimate the virtue of a sinking state, to restrain licentiousness, to calm the tumult of popular fury; and, by inculcating the spirit of justice, moderation, and pity for fallen greatness, to mitigate the inevitable horrors of revolution? our adversaries will at least have the discretion, if not the modesty, to recede from the test.

More than all, their infatuated eagerness, their parricidal zeal to extinguish a sense of Deity, must excite astonishment and horror. Is the idea of an almighty and perfect Ruler unfriendly to any passion which is consistent with innocence, or an obstruction to any design which it is not shameful to avow? Eternal God, on what are thine enemies intent! What are those enterprises of guilt and horror, that, for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in darkness which the eye of heaven must not pierce! Miserable men! Proud of being the offspring of chance; in love with universal disorder; whose happiness is

involved in the belief of there being no witness to their designs, and who are at ease only because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world!

Having been led by the nature of the subject to consider chiefly the manner in which sceptical impiety affects the welfare of states, it is the more requisite to warn you against that most fatal mistake of regarding religion as an engine of policy; and to recall to your recollection that the concern we have in it is much more as *individuals* than as *collective bodies*, and far less temporal than eternal. The happiness which it confers in the present life comprehends the blessings which it scatters by the way in its march to immortality. That future condition of being which it ascertains, and for which its promises and truths are meant to prepare us, is the ultimate end of human societies, the final scope and object of present existence, in comparison of which all the revolutions of nations, and all the vicissitudes of time, are light and transitory. *Godliness has*, it is true, *the promise of the life that now is;* but chiefly *of that which is to come.* Other acquisitions may be requisite to make men great; but, be assured, the religion of Jesus is alone sufficient to make them good and happy. Powerful sources of consolation in sorrow, unshaken fortitude amidst the changes and perturbations of the world, humility remote from meanness, and dignity unstained by pride, contentment in every station, passions pure and calm, with habitual serenity, the full enjoyment of life, undisturbed by the dread of dissolution or the fear of an hereafter, are its invaluable gifts. To these enjoyments, however, you will necessarily continue strangers, unless you resign yourselves wholly to its power; for the consolations of religion are reserved to reward, to sweeten, and to stimulate obedience. Many, without renouncing the profession of Christianity, without formally rejecting its distinguishing doctrines, live in such an habitual violation of its laws, and contradiction to its spirit, that, conscious they have more to fear than to hope

from its truth, they are never able to contemplate it without terror. It haunts their imagination, instead of tranquillizing their hearts, and hangs with depressing weight on all their enjoyments and pursuits. Their religion, instead of comforting them under their troubles, is itself their greatest trouble, from which they seek refuge in the dissipation and vanity of the world, until the throbs and tumults of conscience force them back upon religion. Thus suspended betwixt opposite powers, the sport of contradictory influences, they are disqualified for the happiness of both worlds; and neither enjoy the pleasures of sin, nor the peace of piety. Is it surprising to find a mind thus bewildered in uncertainty, and dissatisfied with itself, courting deception, and embracing with eagerness every pretext to mutilate the claims and enervate the authority of Christianity: forgetting that it is of the very essence of the religious principle to preside and control, and that it is impossible to *serve God and mammon?* It is this class of professors who are chiefly in danger of being entangled in the snares of infidelity.

The champions of infidelity have much more reason to be ashamed than to boast of such converts. For what can be a stronger presumption of the falsehood of a system, than that it is the opiate of a restless conscience; that it prevails with minds of a certain description, not because they find it true, but because they feel it necessary; and that in adopting it they consult less with their reason than with their vices and their fears? It requires but little sagacity to foresee that speculations which originate in guilt must end in ruin. Infidels are not themselves satisfied with the truth of their system: for had they any settled assurance of its principles, in consequence of calm dispassionate investigation, they would never disturb the quiet of the world by their attempts to proselyte; but would lament their own infelicity, in not being able to perceive sufficient evidence for the truth of religion, which furnishes such incentives to virtue, and inspires such exalted hopes. Having nothing to substitute in the place of religion, it is absurd to suppose that, in

opposition to the collective voice of every country, age, and time, proclaiming its necessity, solicitude for the welfare of mankind impels them to destroy it.

To very different motives must their conduct be imputed. More like conspirators than philosophers, in spite of the darkness with which they endeavour to surround themselves, some rays of unwelcome conviction will penetrate, some secret apprehensions that all is not right will make themselves felt, which they find nothing so effectual to quell as an attempt to enlist fresh disciples, who, in exchange for new principles, impart confidence, and diminish fear. For the same reason it is seldom they attack Christianity by argument: their favourite weapons are ridicule, obscenity, and blasphemy; as the most miserable outcasts of society are, of all men, found most to delight in vulgar merriment and senseless riot.

Jesus Christ seems to have *his fan in his hand, to be thoroughly purging his floor;* and nominal christians will probably be scattered like chaff. But has *real* Christianity any thing to fear? Have not the degenerate manners and corrupt lives of multitudes in the visible church, been, on the contrary, the principal occasion of scandal and offence? Infidelity, without intending it, is gradually removing this reproach: possessing the property of attracting to itself the morbid humours which pervade the church, until the christian profession, on the one hand, is reduced to a sound and healthy state, and scepticism, on the other, exhibits nothing but a mass of putridity and disease.

In a view of the final issue of the contest, we should find little cause to lament the astonishing prevalence of infidelity, but for a solicitude for the rising generation, to whom its principles are recommended by two motives, with young minds the most persuasive; the love of independence, and the love of pleasure. With respect to the first, we would earnestly entreat the young to remember that, by the unanimous consent of all ages, modesty, docility, and reverence to superior years, and to parents above all, have been considered as their *appropriate virtues*, a guard assigned by the immutable laws of God and

nature on the inexperience of youth; and with respect to the second, that christianity prohibits no pleasures that are innocent, lays no restraints that are capricious; but that the sobriety and purity which it enjoins, by strengthening the intellectual powers, and preserving the faculties of mind and body in undiminished vigour, lay *the surest* foundation of present peace and future eminence. At such a season as this, it becomes an urgent duty on parents, guardians, and tutors, to watch, not only over the morals, but the principles of those committed to their care; to make it appear that a concern for their eternal welfare is their chief concern; and to imbue them early with that knowledge of the evidences of christianity, and that profound reverence for the Scriptures, that, with the blessing of God (which, with submission, they may then expect), *may keep them from this hour of temptation that has come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth.*

To an attentive observer of the signs of the times, it will appear one of the most extraordinary phenomena of this eventful crisis, that, amidst the ravages of atheism and infidelity, real religion is evidently on the increase. *The kingdom of God*, we know, *cometh not with observation;* but still there are not wanting manifest tokens of its approach. The personal appearance of the Son of God was announced by the shaking of nations; his spiritual kingdom, in all probability, will be established in the midst of similar convulsions and disorders. The blasphemous impiety of the enemies of God, as well as the zealous efforts of his sincere worshippers, will doubtless be overruled to accomplish the purposes of his unerring providence: while, in inflicting the chastisements of offended Deity on corrupt communities and nations, infidelity marks its progress by devastation and ruin, by the prostration of thrones and concussion of kingdoms; thus appalling the inhabitants of the world, and compelling them to take refuge in the church of God, the true sanctuary; the stream of divine knowledge, unobserved, is flowing in new channels, winding its course among humble valleys, refreshing thirsty deserts, and

enriching with far other and higher blessings than those of commerce, the most distant climes and nations, until, agreeably to the prediction of prophecy, the *knowledge of the Lord shall fill and cover the whole earth.*

Within the limits of this discourse it would be impracticable to exhibit the evidences of christianity; nor is it my design; but there is one consideration, resulting immediately from my text, which is entitled to great weight with all who believe in the one living and true God as the sole object of worship. The Ephesians, in common with other Gentiles, are described in the text as being, previous to their conversion, *without God in the world;* that is, without any just and solid acquaintance with his character, destitute of the knowledge of his will, the institutes of his worship, and the hopes of his favour; to the truth of which representation whoever possesses the slightest acquaintance with pagan antiquity must assent. Nor is it a fact less incontestable, that, while human philosophy was never able to abolish idolatry in a single village, the promulgation of the gospel overthrew it in a great part (and that the most enlightened) of the world. If our belief in the unity and perfections of God, together with his moral government, and exclusive right to the worship of mankind, be founded in truth, they cannot reasonably be denied to be truths of the first importance, and infinitely to outweigh the greatest discoveries in science; because they turn the hopes, fears, and interests of man into a totally different channel from that in which they must otherwise flow. Wherever these principles are first admitted, there a new dominion is erected, and a new system of laws established.

But since all events are under divine direction, is it reasonable to suppose that the great Parent, after suffering his creatures to continue for ages ignorant of his true character, should at length in the course of his providence, fix upon falsehood, and that alone, as the effectual method of making himself known; and that what the virtuous exercise of reason in the best and wisest men was never permitted to accomplish, he should confer on fraud and delusion the honour of effecting? It ill

comports with the majesty of truth, or the character of God, to believe that he has built the noblest superstructure on the weakest foundation; or reduced mankind to the miserable alternative either of remaining destitute of the knowledge of himself, or of deriving it from the polluted source of impious imposture. We therefore feel ourselves justified on this occasion, in adopting the triumphant boast of the great apostle: *Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

NOTE TO PAGE 36.

The fury of the most sanguinary parties was especially pointed against the christian priesthood, &c.—The author finds he has given great offence to some friends whom he highly esteems, by applying the term *christian priesthood* to the popish clergy. He begs leave to make a remark or two by way of apology.

1. It is admitted by all candid protestants that salvation is attainable in the Roman-catholic church; but he should be glad to be informed what part of the christian covenant entitles us to expect the salvation of those (where the gospel is promulgated) who are not even a branch of the visible church of Christ. The papistical tenets are either *fundamentally* erroneous, on which supposition it is certain no papist can be saved; or their errors must be consistent with christian faith, and consequently, cannot be a valid reason for excluding those who maintain them from being a part (a most corrupt part, if you please, but still a part) of the christian church.

2. The popish clergy were persecuted under the *character of christians*, not under the notion of heretics and schismatics. They who were the subjects of persecution were certainly the best judges of its aim and direction; and when the Archbishop of Paris and others endeavoured to screen themselves from its effects by a recantation, what did they recant? Was it popery? No; but the profession of christianity. These apostates, doubtless, meant to remove the ground of offence, which, in their opinion, was the christian profession. If the soundest ecclesiastical historians have

not refused the honours of martyrdom to such as suffered in the cause of truth amongst the Gnostics, it ill becomes the liberality of the present age to contemplate, with sullen indifference, or malicious joy, the sufferings of conscientious Catholics.

3. At the period to which the author refers, christian worship of *every kind* was prohibited; while in solemn mockery of religion, adoration was paid to a strumpet, under the title of the Goddess of Reason. Is it necessary to prove that men who were thus abandoned, must be hostile to true religion under every form? Or, if there be any gradations in their abhorrence, to that most which is the most pure and perfect? Are atheism and obscenity more congenial to the protestant than to the popish profession? To have incurred the hatred of the ruling party of France at the season alluded to, is an honour which the author would be sorry to resign, as the exclusive boast of the church of Rome. To have been the object of the partiality of such bloody and inhuman monsters, would have been a stain upon protestants which the virtue of ages could not obliterate.

REFLECTIONS ON WAR.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE BAPTIST MEETING, CAMBRIDGE,

ON TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 1802.

BEING THE DAY OF THANKSGIVING FOR A GENERAL PEACE.

PREFACE.

The writer is not aware that the sentiments contained in this discourse require apology, though he is convinced he needs the candour of the public with respect to the imperfect manner in which they are exhibited. If it be deemed an impropriety to introduce political reflections in a discourse from the pulpit, he wishes it to be remembered that these are of a general nature, and such as, rising out of the subject and the occasion, he cannot suppose it improper for a christian minister to impress. With party politics he is determined to have as little to do as possible, and, in the exercise of his professional duties, nothing at all. Conscious that what is here advanced was meant neither to flatter nor offend any party, he is not very solicitous about those misconstructions or misrepresentations to which the purest intentions are exposed. It will probably be objected, that he has dwelt too much on the horrors of war for a Thanksgiving Sermon; in answer to which he begs it may be remembered, that, as the pleasure of rest is relative to fatigue, and that of ease to pain, so the blessing of peace, considered *merely as peace*, is exactly proportioned to the

calamity of war. As this, whenever it is justifiable, arises out of a *necessity*, not a desire of acquisition, its natural and proper effect is merely to replace a nation in the state it was in before that necessity was incurred, or, in other words, to recover what was lost, and secure what was endangered. The writer intended to add something more on the moral effects of war, (a subject which he should be glad to see undertaken by some superior hand,) but found it would not be compatible with the limits he determined to assign himself. The sermon having been preached for the benefit of a Benevolent Society, instituted at Cambridge, will sufficiently account for the observations on charity to the poor, introduced towards the close. The good which has already arisen from the exertions of that society is more than equal to its most sanguine expectations; and should this publication contribute in the smallest degree to the formation of similar ones in other parts, the author will think himself abundantly compensated for the little trouble it has cost him.

CAMBRIDGE,
June 19, 1802.

A SERMON.

Psalm xlvi. 8, 9.

Come, and behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

To the merciful interposition of Providence we owe it that our native land has been exempted for nearly sixty years from being the seat of war; our insular situation having preserved us, under God, from foreign invasion; the admirable balance of our constitution from internal discord. We have heard indeed of the ravages of armies, and the depopulation of countries, but they have merely supplied a topic of discourse, and have occasioned no serious alarm. The military system, as far as it has appeared in England, has been seen only on the side of its gaiety and pomp, a pleasing show, without imparting any idea of its horrors; and the rumours of battles and slaughter conveyed from afar have rather amused our leisure, than disturbed our repose. While we cannot be too thankful for our security, it has placed us under a disadvantage in one respect, which is, that we have learned to contemplate war with too much indifference, and to feel for the unhappy countries immediately involved in it too little compassion. Had we ever experienced its calamities, we should celebrate the restoration of peace on this occasion with warmer emotions than there is room to apprehend are at present felt. To awaken those sentiments of gratitude which we are this day assembled to express, it will be proper briefly to

recall to your attention some of the dreadful effects of hostility. Real war, my brethren, is a very different thing from that painted image of it, which you see on a parade, or at a review: it is the most awful scourge that Providence employs for the chastisement of man. It is the garment of vengeance with which the Deity arrays himself, when he comes forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth. It is *the day of the Lord, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger.* It is thus described by the sublimest of prophets: *Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty: therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; pangs and sorrows shall take hold on them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flame. Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not give her light.*

War may be considered in two views, as it affects the happiness, and as it affects the virtue of mankind; as a source of misery, and as a source of crimes.

1. *Though we must all die*, as the woman of Tekoa said, *and are as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up;* yet it is impossible for a humane mind to contemplate the rapid extinction of innumerable lives without concern. To perish in a moment, to be hurried instantaneously, without preparation and without warning, into the presence of the Supreme Judge, has something in it inexpressibly awful and affecting. Since the commencement of these hostilities which are now so happily closed, it may be reasonably conjectured that not less than half a million of our fellow-creatures have fallen a sacrifice. Half a million of beings, sharers of the same nature, warmed with the same hopes, and as fondly attached to life as ourselves, have been prematurely swept into the grave; each of whose deaths has pierced the heart of a wife, a parent, a brother, or a sister. How

many of these scenes of complicated distress have occurred since the commencement of hostilities, is known only to Omniscience: that they are innumerable cannot admit of a doubt. In some parts of Europe, perhaps, there is scarcely a family exempt.

Though the whole race of man is doomed to dissolution, and we are all hastening to our long home; yet at each successive moment, life and death seem to divide betwixt them the dominion of mankind, and life to have the largest share. It is otherwise in war: death reigns there without a rival, and without control. War is the work, the element, or rather the sport and triumph, of death, who glories not only in the extent of his conquest, but in the richness of his spoil. In the other methods of attack, in the other forms which death assumes, the feeble and the aged, who at the best can live but a short time, are usually the victims; here it is the vigorous and the strong. It is remarked by an ancient historian, that in peace children bury their parents, in war parents bury their children:* nor is the difference small. Children lament their parents, sincerely indeed, but with that moderate and tranquil sorrow, which it is natural for those to feel who are conscious of retaining many tender ties, many animating prospects. Parents mourn for their children with the bitterness of despair; the aged parent, the widowed mother, loses, when she is deprived of her children, every thing but the capacity of suffering; her heart, withered and desolate, admits no other object, cherishes no other hope. *It is Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.*

But, to confine our attention to the number of the slain, would give us a very inadequate idea of the ravages of the sword. The lot of those who perish instantaneously, may be considered, apart from religious prospects, as comparatively happy, since they are exempt

* In the former editions this sentiment was imputed to Homer: the truth, however, is, as Mr. Hall was afterwards aware, that it was due to his early favourite Herodotus, and occurs in the *Clio*. Ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ (εἰρήνῃ) οἱ παῖδες τοὺς πατέρας θάπτουσι· ἐν δὲ τῷ (πολέμῳ) οἱ πατέρες τοὺς παῖδας. Cap. 87. Ed.

from those lingering diseases and slow torments to which others are liable. We cannot see an individual expire, though a stranger or an enemy, without being sensibly moved, and prompted by compassion to lend him every assistance in our power. Every trace of resentment vanishes in a moment: every other emotion gives way to pity and terror. In these last extremities, we remember nothing but the respect and tenderness due to our common nature. What a scene, then, must a field of battle present, where thousands are left without assistance, and without pity, with their wounds exposed to the piercing air, while the blood, freezing as it flows, binds them to the earth, amidst the trampling of horses, and the insults of an enraged foe! If they are spared by the humanity of the enemy, and carried from the field, it is but a prolongation of torment. Conveyed in uneasy vehicles, often to a remote distance, through roads almost impassable, they are lodged in ill-prepared receptacles for the wounded and the sick, where the variety of distress baffles all the efforts of humanity and skill, and renders it impossible to give to each the attention he demands. Far from their native home, no tender assiduities of friendship, no well-known voice, no wife, or mother, or sister, is near to soothe their sorrows, relieve their thirst, or close their eyes in death. Unhappy man! and must you be swept into the grave unnoticed and unnumbered, and no friendly tear be shed for your sufferings, or mingled with your dust?

We must remember, however, that as a very small proportion of a military life is spent in actual combat, so it is a very small part of its miseries which must be ascribed to this source. More are consumed by the rust of inactivity than by the edge of the sword; confined to a scanty or unwholesome diet, exposed in sickly climates, harassed with tiresome marches and perpetual alarms, their life is a continual scene of hardships and dangers. They grow familiar with hunger, cold, and watchfulness. Crowded into hospitals and prisons, contagion spreads among their ranks, till the ravages of disease exceed those of the enemy.

We have hitherto only adverted to the sufferings of those who are engaged in the profession of arms, without taking into our account the situation of the countries which are the scene of hostilities. How dreadful to hold every thing at the mercy of an enemy, and to receive life itself as a boon dependent on the sword. How boundless the fears which such a situation must inspire, where the issues of life and death are determined by no known laws, principles, or customs, and no conception can be formed of our destiny, except as far as it is dimly deciphered in characters of blood, in the dictates of revenge, and the caprices of power. Conceive but for a moment the consternation which the approach of an invading army would impress on the peaceful villages in this neighbourhood. When you have placed yourselves for an instant in that situation, you will learn to sympathize with those unhappy countries which have sustained the ravages of arms. But how is it possible to give you an idea of these horrors? Here you behold rich harvests, the bounty of heaven and the reward of industry, consumed in a moment, or trampled under foot, while famine and pestilence follow the steps of desolation. There the cottages of peasants given up to the flames, mothers expiring through fear, not for themselves but their infants; the inhabitants flying with their helpless babes in all directions, miserable fugitives on their native soil! In another part you witness opulent cities taken by storm; the streets, where no sounds were heard but those of peaceful industry, filled on a sudden with slaughter and blood, resounding with the cries of the pursuing and the pursued; the palaces of nobles demolished, the houses of the rich pillaged, the chastity of virgins and of matrons violated, and every age, sex, and rank, mingled in promiscuous massacre and ruin.

If we consider the maxims of war which prevailed in the ancient world, and which still prevail in many barbarous nations, we perceive that those who survived the fury of battle and the insolence of victory, were only reserved for more durable calamities; swept into

hopeless captivity, exposed in markets, or plunged in mines, with the melancholy distinction bestowed on princes and warriors, after appearing in the triumphal procession of the conqueror, of being conducted to instant death. The contemplation of such scenes as these forces on us this awful reflection, that neither the fury of wild beasts, the concussions of the earth, nor the violence of tempests, are to be compared to the ravages of arms: and that nature in her utmost extent, or, more properly, divine justice in its utmost severity, has supplied no enemy to man so terrible as man.

Still, however, it would be happy for mankind if the effects of national hostility terminated here; but the fact is, that they who are farthest removed from its immediate desolations, share largely in the calamity. They are drained of the most precious part of their population, their youth, to repair the waste made by the sword. They are drained of their wealth, by the prodigious expense incurred in the equipment of fleets, and the subsistence of armies in remote parts. The accumulation of debt and taxes diminishes the public strength, and depresses private industry. An augmentation in the price of the necessaries of life, inconvenient to all classes, falls with peculiar weight on the labouring poor, who must carry their industry to market every day, and therefore cannot wait for that advance of price which gradually attaches to every other article. Of all people, the poor are, on this account, the greatest sufferers by war, and have the most reason to rejoice in the restoration of peace. As it is the farthest from my purpose to awaken unpleasing reflections, or to taint the pure satisfaction of this day, by the smallest infusion of political acrimony, it will not be expected I should apply these remarks to the peculiar circumstances of this country, though it would be unpardonable in us to forget (for to forget our dangers is to forget our mercies) how nearly we have been reduced to famine, principally, it is true, through a failure in the crops, but greatly aggravated, no doubt, in its pressure, by our being engaged in a war of unexampled expenditure and extent.

In commercial states, (of which Europe principally consists,) whatever interrupts their intercourse is a fatal blow to national prosperity. Such states, having a mutual dependence on each other, the effects of their hostility extend far beyond the parties engaged in the contest. If there be a country highly commercial, which has a decided superiority in wealth and industry, together with a fleet which enables it to protect its trade, the commerce of such a country may survive the shock, but it is at the expense of the commerce of all other nations; a painful reflection to a generous mind. Even there, the usual channels of trade being closed, it is some time before it can force a new passage for itself: previous to which, an almost total stagnation takes place, by which multitudes are impoverished, and thousands of the industrious poor, being thrown out of employment, are plunged into wretchedness and beggary. Who can calculate the number of industrious families in different parts of the world, to say nothing of our own country, who have been reduced to poverty, from this cause, since the peace of Europe was interrupted?

The plague of a widely extended war possesses, in fact, a sort of omnipresence, by which it makes itself every where felt; for while it gives up myriads to slaughter in one part of the globe, it is busily employed in scattering over countries, exempt from its immediate desolations, the seeds of famine, pestilence, and death.

If statesmen, if christian statesmen, at least, had a proper feeling on this subject, and would open their hearts to the reflections which such scenes must inspire, instead of rushing eagerly to arms from the thirst of conquest, or the thirst of gain, would they not hesitate long, would they not try every expedient, every lenient art consistent with national honour, before they ventured on this desperate remedy, or rather, before they plunged into this gulf of horror?

It is time to proceed to another view of the subject, which is, the influence of national warfare on the morals of mankind: a topic on which I must be very brief, but which it would be wrong to omit, as it supplies an

additional reason to every good man for the love of peace.

The contests of nations are both the offspring and the parent of injustice. The word of God ascribes the existence of war to the disorderly passions of men. *Whence come wars and fighting among you?* saith the apostle James; *come they not from your lusts, that war in your members?* It is certain two nations cannot engage in hostilities, but one party must be guilty of injustice; and if the magnitude of crimes is to be estimated by a regard to their consequences, it is difficult to conceive an action of equal guilt with the wanton violation of peace. Though something must generally be allowed for the complexness and intricacy of national claims, and the consequent liability to deception, yet where the guilt of an unjust war is clear and manifest, it sinks every other crime into insignificance. If the existence of war always *implies* injustice, in one at least of the parties concerned, it is also the fruitful parent of crimes. It reverses, with respect to its objects, all the rules of morality. It is nothing less than a temporary repeal of the principles of virtue. It is a system out of which almost all the virtues are excluded, and in which nearly all the vices are incorporated. Whatever renders human nature amiable or respectable, whatever engages love or confidence, is sacrificed at its shrine. In instructing us to consider a portion of our fellow-creatures as the proper objects of enmity, it removes, as far as they are concerned, the basis of all society, of all civilization and virtue; for the basis of these is the good-will due to every individual of the species, as being a part of ourselves. From this principle all the rules of social virtue emanate. Justice and humanity in their utmost extent are nothing more than the practical application of this great law. The sword, and that alone, cuts asunder the bond of consanguinity which unites man to man. As it immediately aims at the extinction of life, it is next to impossible, upon the principle that every thing may be lawfully done to him whom we have a right to kill, to set limits to military

license; for, when men pass from the dominion of reason to that of force, whatever restraints are attempted to be laid on the passions will be feeble and fluctuating. Though we must applaud, therefore, the attempts of the humane Grotius, to blend maxims of humanity with military operations, it is to be feared they will never coalesce, since the former imply the subsistence of those ties which the latter suppose to be dissolved. Hence the morality of peaceful times is directly opposite to the maxims of war. The fundamental rule of the first is to do good; of the latter, to inflict injuries. The former commands us to succour the oppressed; the latter to overwhelm the defenceless. The former teaches men to love their enemies; the latter to make themselves terrible even to strangers. The rules of morality will not suffer us to promote the dearest interest by falsehood; the maxims of war applaud it when employed in the destruction of others. That a familiarity with such maxims must tend to harden the heart, as well as to pervert the moral sentiments, is too obvious to need illustration. The natural consequence of their prevalence is an unfeeling and unprincipled ambition, with an idolatry of talents, and a contempt of virtue; whence the esteem of mankind is turned from the humble, the beneficent, and the good, to men who are qualified by a genius fertile in expedients, a courage that is never appalled, and a heart that never pities, to become the destroyers of the earth. While the philanthropist is devising means to mitigate the evils and augment the happiness of the world, a fellow worker together with God, in exploring and giving effect to the benevolent tendencies of nature, the warrior is revolving, in the gloomy recesses of his capacious mind, plans of future devastation and ruin. Prisons crowded with captives, cities emptied of their inhabitants, fields desolate and waste, are among his proudest trophies. The fabric of his fame is cemented with tears and blood; and if his name is wafted to the ends of the earth, it is in the shrill cry of suffering humanity; in the curses and imprecations of those whom his sword has reduced to despair.

Let me not be understood to involve in this guilt every man who engages in war, or to assert that war itself is in all cases unlawful. The injustice of mankind, hitherto incurable, renders it in some instances necessary, and therefore lawful; but unquestionably, these instances are much more rare than the practice of the world and its loose casuistry would lead us to suppose.

Detesting war, considered as a trade or profession, and conceiving conquerors to be the enemies of their species, it appears* to me that nothing is more suitable to the office of a christian minister, than an attempt, however feeble, to take off the colours from false greatness, and to show the deformity which its delusive splendour too often conceals. This is perhaps one of the best services religion can do to society. Nor is there any more necessary. For, dominion affording a plain and palpable distinction, and every man feeling the effects of power, however incompetent he may be to judge of wisdom and goodness, the character of a hero, there is reason to fear, will always be too dazzling. The sense of his injustice will be too often lost in the admiration of his success.

In contemplating the influence of war on public morals, it would be unpardonable not to remark the effects it never fails to produce in those parts of the world which are its immediate seat. The injury which the morals of a people sustain from an invading army is prodigious. The agitation and suspense universally prevalent are incompatible with every thing which requires calm thought or serious reflection. In such a situation is it any wonder the duties of piety fall into neglect, the sanctuary of God is forsaken, and the gates of Zion mourn and are desolate? Familiarized to the sight of rapine and slaughter, the people must acquire a hard and unfeeling character. The precarious tenure by which every thing is held during the absence of laws, must impair confidence; the sudden revolutions of fortune must be infinitely favourable to fraud and injustice. He who reflects

* "Non est inter artificia bellum, imo res est tam horrenda, ut eam nisi summa necessitas, aut vera caritas, honestam efficere queat. Augustino judice, militare non est delictum, sed propter prædam militare peccatum est." *Grot. de Jure Bell.* lib. ii. c. 25.

on these consequences, will not think it too much to affirm, that the injury the virtue of a people sustains from invasion is greater than that which affects their property or their lives. He will perceive, that by such a calamity the seeds of order, virtue, and piety, which it is the first care of education to implant and mature, are swept away as by a hurricane.

Though the sketch which I have attempted to give of the miseries which ensue, when nation lifts up arms against nation, is faint and imperfect, it is yet sufficient to imprint on our minds, a salutary horror of such scenes, and a gratitude, warm, I trust, and sincere, to that gracious Providence which has brought them to a close.

To acknowledge the hand of God is a duty indeed at all times; but there are seasons when it is made so bare, that it is next to impossible, and therefore signally criminal, to overlook it. It is almost unnecessary to add that the present is one of those seasons. If ever we are expected to *be still, and know that he is God*, it is on the present occasion, after a crisis so unexampled in the annals of the world; during which scenes have been disclosed, and events have arisen, so much more astonishing than any that history had recorded or romance had feigned, that we are compelled to lose sight of human agency, and to behold the Deity acting as it were apart and alone.

The contest in which we have been lately engaged is distinguished from all others in modern times by the number of nations it embraced, and the animosity with which it was conducted. Making its first appearance in the centre of the civilized world, like a fire kindled in the thickest part of a forest, it spread during ten years on every side; it burnt in all directions, gathering fresh fury in its progress, till it enwrapped the whole of Europe in its flames; an awful spectacle, not only to the inhabitants of the earth, but in the eyes of superior beings! What place can we point out to which its effects have not extended? Where is the nation, the family, the individual I might almost say, who has not felt its influence? It is not, my brethren, the termination of an

ordinary contest which we are assembled this day to commemorate; it is an event which includes for the present (may it long perpetuate) the tranquillity of Europe and the pacification of the world. We are met to express our devout gratitude to God for putting a period to a war, the most eventful perhaps that has been witnessed for a thousand years, a war which has transformed the face of Europe, removed the land-marks of nations and limits of empire.

The spirit of animosity with which it has been conducted is another circumstance which has eminently distinguished the recent contest. As it would be highly improper to enter, on this occasion, (were my abilities equal to the task,) into a discussion of those principles which have divided, and probably will long divide, the sentiments of men, it may be sufficient to observe, in general, that what principally contributed to make the contest so peculiarly violent, was a discordancy betwixt the opinions and the institutions of society. A daring spirit of speculation, untempered, alas! by humility and devotion, has been the distinguishing feature of the present times. While it confined itself to the exposure of the corruptions of religion and the abuses of power, it met with some degree of countenance from the wise and good in all countries, who were ready to hope it was the instrument destined by Providence to meliorate the condition of mankind. How great was their disappointment when they perceived that pretensions to philanthropy were, with many, only a mask assumed for the more successful propagation of impiety and anarchy!

From the prevalence of this spirit, however, a schism was gradually formed between the adherents of those, who, styling themselves philosophers, were intent on some great change, which they were little careful to explain, and the patrons of the ancient order of things. The pretensions of each were plausible. The accumulation of abuses and the corruptions of religion furnished weapons to the philosophers; the dangerous tendency of the speculations of these latter, together with their impiety, which became every day more manifest, gave an

advantage not less considerable to their opponents, which they did not fail to improve. In this situation the breach grew wider and wider; nothing temperate or conciliating was admitted. Every attempt at purifying religion without impairing its authority, and at improving the condition of society, without shaking its foundation, was crushed and annihilated in the encounter of two hostile forces. By this means the way was prepared, first for internal dissension, and then for wars the most bloody and extensive.

The war in which so great a part of the world was lately engaged has been frequently styled a war of principle. This was indeed its exact character; and it was this which rendered it so violent and obstinate. Disputes which are founded merely on passion or on interest, are comparatively of short duration. They are, at least, not calculated to spread. However they may inflame the principals, they are but little adapted to gain partizans.

To render them durable, there must be an infusion of speculative opinions. For, corrupt as men are, they are yet so much the creatures of reflection, and so strongly addicted to sentiments of right and wrong, that their attachment to a public cause can rarely be secured, or their animosity kept alive, unless their understandings are engaged by some appearances of truth and rectitude. Hence speculative differences in religion and politics become rallying points to the passions. Whoever reflects on the civil wars between the Guelphs and Ghibbelines, or the adherents of the pope and emperor, which distracted Italy and Germany in the middle ages; or those betwixt the houses of York and Lancaster, in the fifteenth century, will find abundant confirmation of this remark. This is well understood by the leaders of parties in all nations; who, though they frequently aim at nothing more than the attainment of power, yet always contrive to cement the attachment of their followers, by mixing some speculative opinion with their contests, well knowing that what depends for support merely on the irascible passions soon subsides. Then does party animosity reach its height, when, to an interference of in-

terests sufficient to kindle resentment, is superadded a persuasion of rectitude, a conviction of truth, an apprehension in each party that they are contending for principles of the last importance, on the success of which the happiness of millions depends. Under these impressions men are apt to indulge the most selfish and vindictive passions without suspicion or control. The understanding, indeed, in that state, instead of controlling the passions, often serves only to give steadiness to their impulse, to ratify and consecrate, so to speak, all their movements.

When we apply these remarks to the late contest, we can be at no loss to discover the source of the unparalleled animosity which inflamed it. Never before were so many opposing interests, passions, and principles committed to such a decision. On one side an attachment to the ancient order of things, on the other a passionate desire of change; a wish in some to perpetuate, in others to destroy every thing; every abuse sacred in the eyes of the former, every foundation attempted to be demolished by the latter; a jealousy of power shrinking from the slightest innovation, pretensions to freedom pushed to madness and anarchy; superstition in all its dotage, impiety in all its fury: whatever, in short, could be found most discordant in the principles, or violent in the passions of men, were the fearful ingredients which the hand of divine justice selected to mingle in this furnace of wrath. Can we any longer wonder at the desolations it made in the earth? Great as they are, they are no more than might be expected from the peculiar nature of the warfare. When we take this into our consideration, we are no longer surprised to find that the variety of its battles burdens the memory, that the imagination is perfectly fatigued in travelling over its scenes of slaughter, and that falling, like the mystic star in the Apocalypse, *upon the streams and the rivers, it turned the third part of their waters into blood.**

* The author has inserted some reflections here, which were not included in the discourse as delivered from the pulpit. He wished to explain himself somewhat more fully on certain points, on which his sentiments in a former publication have been much misunderstood or misrepresented. But this is a circumstance with which, as it has not troubled himself, he wishes not any farther to trouble the reader.

Whether the foundations of lasting tranquillity are laid, or a respite only afforded to the nations of the earth, in the present auspicious event, is a question, the discussion of which would only damp the satisfaction of this day. Whatever may be the future determinations of Providence, let no gloomy foreboding depress our gratitude for its gracious interposition in our favour. While we feel sentiments of respectful acknowledgment to the human instruments employed, let us remember they are but instruments, and that it is our duty to look through them to Him who is the author of every good and perfect gift.

Let us now turn to the pleasing part of our subject, which invites us to contemplate the reasons for gratitude and joy suggested by the restoration of peace.

Permit me to express my hope, that along with peace the spirit of peace will return. How can we better imitate our heavenly Father, than, when he is pleased to compose the animosities of nations, to open our hearts to every milder influence? Let us hope, more mutual forbearance, a more candid construction of each other's views and sentiments, will prevail. No end can now be answered by the revival of party disputes. The speculations which gave occasion to them have yielded to the arbitration of the sword, and neither the fortune of war, nor the present condition of Europe, is such as affords to any party room for high exultation. Our public and private affections are no longer at variance. That benevolence which embraces the world, is now in perfect harmony with the tenderness that endears our country. Burying in oblivion, therefore, all national antipathies, together with those cruel jealousies and suspicions which have too much marred the pleasures of mutual intercourse, let our hearts correspond to the blessing we celebrate, and keep pace, as far as possible, with the movements of divine beneficence.

A most important benefit has already followed the return of peace, a reduction of the price of bread; and though other necessaries of life have not fallen in proportion, this is a circumstance which can hardly fail to fol-

low. We trust the circumstances of the poor and the labouring classes will be much improved, and that there will shortly be no complaining in our streets. Every cottager, we hope, will feel that there is peace; commerce return to its ancient channels, the public burdens be lightened, the national debt diminished, and harmony and plenty again gladden the land.

In enumerating the motives to national gratitude, which the retrospect of the past supplies, it would be unpardonable not to reckon among the most cogent, the preservation of our excellent constitution; nor can I doubt of the concurrence of all who hear me when I add, it is a pleasing reflection, that at a period when the spirit of giddiness and revolt has been so prevalent, we have preferred the blessings of order to a phantom of liberty, and have not been so mad as to wade through the horrors of a revolution to make way for a military despot. If the constitution has sustained serious injury, either during the war, or at any preceding period, as there is great room to apprehend, we shall have leisure (may we but have virtue!) to apply temperate and effectual reforms. In the mean time, let us love it sincerely, cherish it tenderly, and secure it as far as possible, on all sides, watching with impartial solicitude against every thing that may impair its spirit, or endanger its form.

But above all, let us cherish the spirit of religion. When we wish to open our hearts on this subject, and to represent to you the vanity, the nothingness of every thing else in comparison, we feel ourselves checked by an apprehension you will consider it merely as professional language, and consequently entitled to little regard. If, however, you will only turn your eyes to the awful scenes before you, our voice may be spared. They will speak loud enough of themselves. On this subject they will furnish the most awful and momentous instruction. From them you will learn, that the safety of nations is not to be sought in arts or in arms; that science may flourish amidst the decay of humanity; that the utmost barbarity may be blended with the utmost refinement; that a passion for speculation, unrestrained by the fear of God

and a deep sense of human imperfection, merely hardens the heart; and that, as religion, in short, is the great tamer of the breast, the source of tranquillity and order, so the crimes of voluptuousness and impiety inevitably conduct a people, before they are aware, to the brink of desolation and anarchy.

If you had wished to figure to yourselves a country which had reached the utmost pinnacle of prosperity, you would undoubtedly have turned your eyes to France, as she appeared a few years before the revolution; illustrious in learning and genius; the favourite abode of the arts, and the mirror of fashion, whither the flower of the nobility from all countries resorted, to acquire the last polish of which the human character is susceptible. Lulled in voluptuous repose, and dreaming of a philosophical millennium, without dependence upon God, like the generation before the flood, *they ate*, *they drank*, *they married*, *they were given in marriage*. In that exuberant soil every thing seemed to flourish, but religion and virtue. The season however was at length arrived, when God was resolved to punish their impiety, as well as to avenge the blood of his servants, whose souls had for a century been incessantly crying to him from under the altar. And what method did he employ for this purpose? When He to whom vengeance belongs, when He whose ways are unsearchable, and whose wisdom is inexhaustible, proceeded to the execution of this strange work, he drew from his treasures a weapon he had never employed before. Resolving to make their punishment as signal as their crimes, he neither let loose an inundation of barbarous nations, nor the desolating powers of the universe: he neither overwhelmed them with earthquakes, nor visited them with pestilence. He summoned from among themselves a ferocity more terrible than either; a ferocity which, mingling in the struggle for liberty, and borrowing aid from that very refinement to which it seemed to be opposed, turned every man's hand against his neighbour, sparing no age, nor sex, nor rank, till, satiated with the ruin of greatness, the distresses of innocence, and the tears of beauty, it

terminated its career in the most unrelenting despotism. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and which wast, and which shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.*

If the weakness of humanity will not permit us to keep pace with the movements of divine justice; if, from the deep commiseration excited by the view of so much woe, our tongue falters in expressing those sublime sentiments of triumph which revelation suggests on this occasion, we shall be pardoned by the Being who knows our frame; while nothing can prevent us, at least, from adoring this illustrious vindication of his own religion, whose divinity we see is not less apparent in the blessings it bestows, than in the calamities which mark its departure.

Our only security against similar calamities is a steady adherence to this religion; not the religion of mere form and profession, but that which has a seat in the heart; not as it is mutilated and debased by the refinements of a false philosophy, but as it exists in all its simplicity and extent in the sacred Scriptures; consisting in sorrow for sin, in the love of God, and in faith in a crucified Redeemer. If this religion revives and flourishes amongst us, we may still surmount all our difficulties, and no weapon formed against us will prosper: if we despise or neglect it, no human power can afford us protection. Instead of showing our love to our country, therefore, by engaging eagerly in the strife of parties, let us choose to signalize it rather by beneficence, by piety, by an exemplary discharge of the duties of private life, under a persuasion that that man, in the final issue of things, will be seen to have been the best patriot, who is the best christian. He who diffuses the most happiness, and mitigates the most distress within his own circle, is undoubtedly the best friend to his country and the world, since nothing more is necessary than for all men to imitate his conduct, to make the greatest part of the misery of the world cease in a moment. While the passion, then, of some is to shine, of some to govern, and of others to accumulate,

let one great passion alone inflame our breasts, let the passion which reason ratifies, which conscience approves, which heaven inspires, that of being and of doing good.

There is no vanity, I trust, in supposing that the reflections which this Discourse has presented to your view, have awakened those sentiments of gratitude to the Father of mercies for his gracious interposition in the restoration of peace, which you are impatient to express by stronger evidence than words. Should this be the case, a plain path is before you. While the eminence of the divine perfections renders it impossible for us to contribute to the happiness, or augment the glory of the Creator, he has left amongst us, for the exercise of our virtue, the indigent and the afflicted, whom he has in an especial manner committed to our care, and appointed to represent himself. The objects of the institution, for which I have this day the honour to plead, are those of whom the very mention is sufficient to excite compassion in every feeling mind, *the sick and the aged poor*.* To be scantily provided with the necessaries of life, to endure cold, hunger, and nakedness, is a great calamity at all seasons; it is almost unnecessary to observe how much these evils are aggravated by the pressure of disease, when exhausted nature demands whatever the most tender assiduity can supply to cheer its languor and support its sufferings. It is the peculiar misfortune of the afflicted poor, that the very circumstance which increases their wants, cuts off, by disqualifying them for labour, the means of their supply. Bodily affliction, therefore,

* It may be proper to remind the reader that this discourse was preached for the benefit of a Benevolent Society, recently instituted at Cambridge, for the relief of the sick and aged poor; and that one principal motive with the author for complying with the request of the Society in publishing it, was a desire to excite the attention of the benevolent to the formation of similar societies in other parts. For the local information of such as may be desirous of contributing to this Institution, the writer has the pleasure to add, that Mr. Alderman Ind, with that benignity which marks his character, has been so kind as to undertake the office of treasurer to the society, to whom the benevolent are requested to send their annual subscriptions or donations. A further account of the institution will be found at the end of the Sermon.

falls upon them with an accumulated weight. Poor, at best, when seized with sickness they become utterly destitute. Incapable even of presenting themselves to the eye of pity, nothing remains for them, but silently to yield themselves up to sorrow and despair. The second class of objects, which it is the design of this society to relieve, are *the aged poor*. Here it is quite unnecessary for me to attempt to paint to you the sorrows of old age; a period indeed which, by a strange inconsistency, we all wish to reach, while we shrink with a sort of horror from the infirmities and sufferings inseparable from that melancholy season. What can be a more pitiable object than decrepitude, sinking under the accumulated load of years and of penury? Arrived at that period when the most fortunate confess they have no pleasure, how forlorn is his situation, who, destitute of the means of subsistence, has survived his last child, or his last friend. Solitary and neglected, without comfort and without hope, depending for every thing on a kindness he has no means of conciliating, he finds himself left alone in a world to which he has ceased to belong, and is only felt in society as a burden it is impatient to shake off. Such are the objects to which this institution solicits your regard.

It is, in my humble opinion, a most excellent part of the plan of the Society, in whose behalf I address you, that no relief is administered without first personally visiting the objects in their own abode. By such means the precise circumstances of each case are clearly ascertained, and imposture is sure to be detected. Where charity is administered without this precaution, as it is impossible to discriminate real from pretended distress, the most disinterested benevolence often fails of its purpose; and that is yielded to clamorous importunity, which is withheld from lonely want. The mischief extends much farther. From the frequency of such imposition, the best minds are in danger of becoming disgusted with the exercise of pecuniary charity, till, from a mistaken persuasion that it is impossible to guard against deception, they treat the most abandoned and the most deserving with the same neglect. Thus the

heart contracts into selfishness, and those delicious emotions which the benevolent Author of Nature implanted to prompt us to relieve distress, become extinct; a loss greater to ourselves than to the objects to whom we deny our compassion. To prevent a degradation of character so fatal, allow me to urge on all whom Providence has blessed with the means of doing good, on those especially who are indulged with affluence and leisure, the importance of employing some portion of their time in *inspecting*, as well as of their property in *relieving*, the distresses of the time.

By this means an habitual tenderness will be cherished, which will heighten inexpressibly the happiness of life, at the same time that it will most effectually counteract that selfishness which a continual addictedness to the pursuits of avarice and ambition never fails to produce. As selfishness is a principle of continual operation, it needs to be opposed by some other principle, whose operation is equally uniform and steady; but the casual impulse of compassion, excited by occasional applications for relief, is by no means equal to this purpose. Then only will benevolence become a prevailing habit of mind, when its exertion enters into the *system* of life, and occupies some stated portion of the time and attention. In addition to this, it is worth while to reflect how much consolation the poor must derive from finding they are the objects of personal attention to their more opulent neighbours; that they are acknowledged as brethren of the same family; and that, should they be overtaken with affliction or calamity, they are in no danger of perishing unpitied and unnoticed. With all the pride that wealth is apt to inspire, how seldom are the opulent truly aware of their high destination. Placed by the Lord of all, on an eminence, and intrusted with a superior portion of his goods, to them it belongs to be the dispensers of his bounty, to succour distress, to draw merit from obscurity, to behold oppression and want vanish before them, and, accompanied wherever they move with perpetual benedictions, to present an image of Him, who, at the close of time, in the kingdom of the redeemed,

will *wipe away tears from all faces.* It is surely unnecessary to remark how insipid are the pleasures of voluptuousness and ambition, compared to what such a life must afford, whether we compare them with respect to the present, the review of the past, or the prospect of the future.

It is probable some may object that such exertions, however amiable in themselves, are rendered unnecessary by the system of parochial relief established in this country. To which it is obvious to reply, that however useful this institution may be, there must always be a great deal of distress, which it can never relieve. Like all national institutions, it is incapable of bending from the rigour of general rules, so as to adapt itself to the precise circumstance of each respective case. Besides that it would be vain to expect much tenderness in the execution of a legal office, the machine itself, though it may be well suited to the general purpose it is intended to answer, is too large and unwieldy to touch those minute points of difference, those distinct kinds and gradations of distress, to which the operation of personal benevolence will easily adapt itself. In addition to which it will occur to those who reflect, that on account of the increasing demands of the poor, the parochial system, which presses hard upon many ill able to bear it, is already strained to the utmost.

Although the Society in whose behalf I address you is but recently established, it has been enabled painfully to ascertain the vast proportion of its objects of the female sex,—a melancholy circumstance, deserving the serious attention of the public on more accounts than one. Of the cases which have occurred to their notice, since the commencement of their labours, more than three-fourths have been of that description. The situation of females without fortune in this country is indeed deeply affecting. Excluded from all the active employments in which they might engage with the utmost propriety, by men, who to the injury of one sex, add the disgrace of making the other effeminate and ridiculous, an indigent female, the object probably of love and tenderness in her youth,

at a more advanced age a withered flower! has nothing to do but to retire and die. Thus it comes to pass, that the most amiable part of our species, by a detestable combination in those who ought to be their protectors, are pushed off the stage, as though they were no longer worthy to live, when they ceased to be the objects of passion. How strongly on this account this society is entitled to your attention (as words would fail) I leave to the pensive reflection of your own bosoms.

To descant on the evils of poverty might seem entirely unnecessary, (for what with most is the great business of life, but to remove it to the greatest possible distance?) were it not, that besides its being the most common of all evils, there are circumstances peculiar to itself, which expose it to neglect. The seat of its sufferings are the appetites, not the passions; appetites which are common to all, and which, being capable of no peculiar combinations, confer no distinction. There are kinds of distress founded on the passions, which, if not applauded, are at least admired in their excess, as implying a peculiar refinement of sensibility in the mind of the sufferer. Embellished by taste, and wrought by the magic of genius into innumerable forms, they turn grief into a luxury, and draw from the eyes of millions delicious tears. But no muse ever ventured to adorn the distresses of poverty or the sorrows of hunger. Disgusting taste and delicacy, and presenting nothing pleasing to the imagination, they are mere misery in all its nakedness and deformity. Hence, shame in the sufferer, contempt in the beholder, and an obscurity of station, which frequently removes them from the view, are their inseparable portion. Nor can I reckon it on this account amongst the improvements of the present age, that, by the multiplication of works of fiction, the attention is diverted from scenes of real to those of imaginary distress; from the distress which demands relief, to that which admits of embellishment: in consequence of which the understanding is enervated, the heart is corrupted, and those feelings which were designed to stimulate to active benevolence are employed

in nourishing a sickly sensibility. To a most impure and whimsical writer,* whose very humanity is unnatural, we are considerably indebted for this innovation. Though it cannot be denied, that by diffusing a warmer colouring over the visions of fancy, sensibility is often a source of exquisite pleasures to others, if not to the possessor, yet it should never be confounded with benevolence; since it constitutes at best rather the ornament of a fine, than the virtue of a good, mind. A good man may have nothing of it, a bad man may have it in abundance.

Leaving therefore these amusements of the imagination to the vain and indolent, let us awake to nature and truth; and in a world from which we must so shortly be summoned, a world abounding with so many real scenes of heart-rending distress, as well as of vice and impiety, employ all our powers in relieving the one and in correcting the other; that when we have arrived at the borders of eternity, we may not be tormented with the awful reflection of having lived in vain.

If ever there was a period when poverty made a more forcible appeal than usual to the heart, it is unquestionably that which we have lately witnessed; the calamities of which, though greatly diminished by the auspicious event which we now celebrate, are far from being entirely removed. Poverty used in happier times to be discerned in a superior meanness of apparel and the total absence of ornament. We have seen its ravages reach the *man*, proclaiming themselves in the trembling step, in the dejected countenance, and the faded form. We have seen emaciated infants, no ruddiness in their cheeks, no sprightliness in their motions, while the eager and imploring looks of their mothers, reduced below the loud expressions of grief, have announced unutterable anguish and silent despair.

From the reflections which have been made on the peculiar nature of poverty, you will easily account for the prodigious stress which is laid on the duty of pecuniary

* The author alludes to Sterne, the whole tendency of whose writings is to degrade human nature, by resolving all our passions into a mere animal instinct, and that of the grossest sort. It was perfectly natural for such a writer to employ his powers in panegyrising an ass.

benevolence in the Old and New Testaments. In the former, God delighted in assuming the character of the patron of the poor and needy; in the latter, the short definition of the religion which he approves, *is to visit the fatherless and widow, and keep himself unspotted from the world.* He who knew what was in man, well knew that, since the entrance of sin, selfishness was become the epidemic disease of human nature; a malady which almost every thing tends to inflame, and the conquest of which is absolutely necessary, before we can be prepared for the felicity of heaven; that whatever leads us out of ourselves, whatever unites us to him and his creatures in pure love, is an important step towards the recovery of his image; and finally, that his church would consist for the most part of *the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*, whom he was resolved to shield from the contempt of all who respect his authority, by selecting them from the innumerable millions of mankind to be the peculiar representatives of himself.

Happy are they whose lives correspond to these benevolent intentions; who, looking beyond the transitory distinctions which prevail here, and will vanish at the first approach of eternity, honour God in his children, and Christ in his image. How much, on the contrary, are those to be pitied, in whatever sphere they move, who live to themselves, unmindful of the coming of their Lord! *When he shall come and shall not keep silence, when a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him*, every thing, it is true, will combine to fill them with consternation; yet, methinks neither the voice of the archangel, nor the trump of God, nor the dissolution of the elements, nor the face of the Judge itself, from which the heavens will flee away, will be so dismaying and terrible to these men as the sight of the poor members of Christ; whom having spurned and neglected in the days of their humiliation, they will then behold with amazement united to their Lord, covered with his glory, and seated on his throne. How will they be astonished to see them surrounded with so much majesty! How will they cast down their eyes in their

presence! How will they curse that gold, which will then eat their flesh as with fire, and that avarice, that indolence, that voluptuousness, which will entitle them to so much misery! You will then learn that the imitation of Christ is the only wisdom: you will then be convinced it is better to be endeared to the cottage, than admired in the palace; when to have wiped away the tears of the afflicted, and inherited the prayers of the widow and the fatherless, shall be found a richer patrimony than the favour of princes.

ACCOUNT OF

THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,

FOR THE

RELIEF OF THE SICK AND AGED POOR,

INSTITUTED AT CAMBRIDGE, 1801.

Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor. Psalm xli. 1.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matt. xxv. 40.

THAT benevolence is an habitual duty, arising out of our constitution as rational and social creatures, and enforced upon us by the most powerful motives as Christians, no one will deny. The various exertions of the humane and the pious, in private circles and in public institutions, are so many proofs of the truth of this sentiment; but notwithstanding those exertions, there is still ample room for enlargement. Those persons who are in the habit of visiting the cottages or the chambers of the poor, are too frequently the melancholy witnesses of that extreme poverty, pining sickness, and poignant distress, which energetically call for relief.

With the design of administering, in some degree, such relief, a number of persons have formed themselves into a Society, the nature and objects of which are such, that it

may, with the greatest truth, be said to *deserve,* and it can scarcely be doubted but it will *meet* with such encouragement as may render it a blessing to the poor of the town of CAMBRIDGE. It is likewise ardently hoped, that the Society will meet with such farther encouragement, that its benevolent exertions may not be confined to the town, but extended to the neighbouring villages.

The FIRST object of the Society is to afford PECUNIARY ASSISTANCE to the SICK and the AGED POOR. To select proper objects, and guard against the abuses attending indiscriminate relief, visitors will be appointed to examine and judge of the nature of every case, and report the same to a Committee of the Society.

The SECOND object of the Society is—The MORAL and RELIGIOUS improvement of the objects relieved. *A word spoken in season,* (says the wise man,) *how good is it!* The hour of affliction, the bed of sickness, afford the most seasonable opportunities for usefulness; and it is hoped, that the heart may in a more peculiar manner be open to the best of impressions at such a season, and when under a sense of obligation for relief already administered.

In a Society like the present, all distinctions of sects and parties are lost in the one general design of DOING GOOD; and the success which has attended societies, nearly similar, in different parts of this kingdom, and more particularly in the metropolis, in relieving the distress and ameliorating the condition of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures, affords reason to hope, that under the divine blessing, similar success will attend the Society established in this town.

RULES.

I. Any person, of whatever denomination, age, or sex, disposed to assist this benevolent undertaking, may be

admitted a Subscriber; each Subscriber, on admission, to pay *not less* than one shilling, and from two-pence per week to any sum such Subscriber may think proper.

II. That the business of the Society be managed by a Committee of fourteen persons, including the Treasurer and Secretary; five of whom shall be competent to transact business:—that the Committee be open to any member of the Society, who may think proper to attend. In case of any vacancy in the Committee, by death, or resignation, the remaining members of the Committee be empowered to fill up such vacancy.

III. That the Committee meet monthly, at each others' houses, to receive reports, consider of cases, appoint visitors, and audit their accounts.

IV. That there be an annual general meeting, of which due notice will be given, when the state of the Society shall be reported, and the Treasurer, Secretary, and Committee appointed, to manage the concerns thereof.

V. That the SICK and the AGED be esteemed the *only* objects of the compassion of this Society; and when the fund is reduced to the sum of five pounds, the cases of the sick alone shall be attended to.

VI. That no member be allowed to recommend a case, until three months after his or her subscription has commenced, nor, if four months in arrears, until such arrears be discharged, provided he or she has received notice of the same.

VII. That no case be received but from a Subscriber, who is expected to be well acquainted with the case recommended, and to report the particulars to one of the visitors.

VIII. That the Visitors be appointed to administer relief, and not the person who recommends the case.

IX. That no Subscribers, while they continue such, shall receive any relief from this Society, nor shall any of those who conduct the business thereof, receive any gratuity for their services.

The Committee consists of an equal number of Ladies and Gentlemen; and persons of both sexes are appointed as visitors in rotation.

Subscriptions and Donations are received by the Treasurer, Secretary, or any Member of the Committee.

At a General Meeting of the Society, held, agreeably to public notice, at Mr. Alderman IND's, on Monday, May 3, 1802:—It was resolved, That when the Annual Subscriptions of the Society amount to *Sixty* Pounds, and the Fund to *Thirty* Pounds, the Committee be empowered to extend relief to other distressed objects besides the SICK and the AGED.

THE SENTIMENTS PROPER TO THE PRESENT CRISIS:

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

BRIDGE STREET, BRISTOL,

October 19, 1803;

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL FAST.

Uter esset, non uter imperaret. *Cicero.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

Some apology is due to the public for this discourse appearing so long after it was preached. The fact is, the writer was engaged on an exchange of services for a month with his highly esteemed friend, the Rev. Mr. Lowell, of Bristol, author of an excellent volume of Sermons on Practical Subjects, at the time it was delivered, and had no opportunity of writing it till he returned. As it touches entirely on permanent topics, except what relates to the threatened invasion, still impending over us, he knows not but it may be as suitable now as if it had appeared earlier. As it is, he commits it to the candour of the public. He has only to add, that the allusion to the effects of the tragic muse* should have been marked as a quotation, though the author knows not with certainty to whom to ascribe it. He believes it fell from the elegant pen of an illustrious female, Mrs. More.

* Page 136.

Shelford,

Nov. 30, 1803.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In this edition, the author has corrected those errors of the press, which in the former were very considerable. The Monthly Reviewers have founded a criticism entirely on one of them. The author had remarked, that infidelity was bred in the stagnant marshes of corrupted christianity. The printer having omitted the word *corrupted*, the reviewers remark that they never found in their map of christianity any stagnant marshes. Having mentioned the Monthly Reviewers, he must be permitted to notice a most singular error into which they have been betrayed; that of supposing the author had confounded Aristotle with Mrs. More. It is well known to every one who has the smallest tincture of learning, that the great critic of antiquity represents the design of tragedy to be that of purifying the heart by pity and terror. It appeared to the author that infidelity, by the crimes and disorders it has produced in society, was not incapable of answering a similar purpose. He accordingly availed himself of the comparison; but it having occurred to him afterwards that he had read a similar passage in Mrs. More, he thought it right to notice this circumstance in an advertisement; in which he says, he apprehends the *allusion* to the tragic muse to belong to Mrs. More. It was not the opinion of its being the purpose of tragedy to purify the heart

by pity and terror, that he ascribed to that celebrated female; but *solely the allusion* to that opinion as illustrating the effect of infidelity. It is on this slender foundation, however, that the writer in the Monthly Review, with what design is best known to himself, has thought fit to represent him as ascribing to Mrs. More, as its author, a critical opinion which has been current for more than two thousand years. He is certain his words will not support any such construction, though he will not contend that he has expressed himself with all the clearness that might be wished.

He is sorry to find some passages towards the close of the sermon have given offence to persons whom he highly esteems. It has been objected, that the author has admitted to heaven a crowd of legislators, patriots, and heroes, whose title to that honour, on christian principles, is very equivocal. In reply to which, he begs it to be remembered that the New Testament teaches, that *God is no respecter of persons; that in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him;* that we may be certain there will not be wanting in the innumerable assembly around the throne, some of the highest rank and of the most illustrious talents; and that the writer has qualified the character of those legislators and patriots, whom he has represented as being in heaven, with the epithet of *virtuous;* and this, after he had been at some *pains to explain what he comprehended in his idea of virtue.* He has been censured for attempting to animate the defenders of their country, by holding out the prospect of

immortality, should they fall in the contest; and it has been asked why, instead of amusing them with this phantom, not endeavour to convince them of the necessity of religious preparation for death, when he must be aware it is very possible for men to die fighting in defence of their country, and yet fall short of future happiness. The writer is, indeed, fully persuaded, that in the concerns of salvation, no reliance ought to be placed on a detached instance of virtuous conduct; that a solid piety is indispensably necessary, and that *without holiness no man can see the Lord.* But, after having employed great part of the preceding discourse in urging the necessity of repentance, he may surely be allowed for a moment to take it for granted that his admonitions have been attended to; and, without treading over the same ground, in an address to men who are supposed to be just entering the field, to advert to topics more immediately connected with military prowess. It was never his intention to place worldly on a level with religious considerations, or to confound the sentiments of honour with the dictates of duty. But, as the fear of death, and the love of fame, are both natural, and both innocent within certain limits, he was not aware there could be any impropriety, when he had already dwelt largely on religious topics, to oppose one natural sentiment to another. He who confines himself to such considerations, violates the character of the christian minister; he who neglects them entirely, is wanting to the duties of the present crisis. The writer has only to add on this head, that, in the addresses on

similar occasions in the Scriptures, there is rarely a greater mixture of religious topics, or more reserve in appealing to other motives, than is found here; so that, if he has erred, his error is countenanced by the highest, that is, by inspired, authority.

Finally, he has been censured for expressing, in such strong terms, his detestation of the character of Buonaparte. It has been said, that however just his representation may be, it is losing sight of the true design of a national fast, which is to confess and bewail our own sins, instead of inveighing against the sins of others. That this is the true end of a public fast, the writer is convinced; on which account he has expressly cautioned his readers against placing reliance on their supposed superiority in virtue to their enemies. What he has said of the character of Buonaparte is with an entirely different view; it is urged, not as a ground of security, but as a motive to the most vigorous resistance. In this view, it is impossible for it to be too deeply impressed. When a people are threatened with invasion, will it be affirmed that the personal character of the invader is of no consequence; and that it is not worth a moment's consideration whether he possess the virtuous moderation of a Washington, or the restless and insatiable ambition of a Buonaparte? Though hostile invasion is an unspeakable calamity in any situation, and under any circumstances, yet it is capable of as many modifications as the dispositions and designs of the invaders; and if in the present instance the crimes of our enemy supply the most cogent motives to resist-

ance, can it be wrong to turn his vices against himself; and, by imprinting a deep abhorrence of his perfidy and cruelty on the hearts of the people, to put them more thoroughly on their guard against their effects?

It may be thought a sermon on a fast-day should have comprehended a fuller enumeration of our national sins, and this was the author's design when he first turned his attention to the subject: but he was diverted from it by observing that these themes, from the press at least, seem to make no kind of impression; and that whatever the most skilful preacher can advance, is fastidiously repelled as stale and professional declamation. The people in general are settled into an indifference so profound, with respect to all such subjects, that the preacher who arraigns their vices in the most vehement manner, has no reason to be afraid of exciting their displeasure; but it is well, if, long before he has finished his reproofs, he has not lulled them to sleep. From a due consideration of the temper of the times, he therefore thought it expedient to direct the attention to what appeared to him the chief source of public degeneracy, rather than insist at large on particular vices. He has in this edition, in some places, expanded the illustration where it appeared defective, as well as corrected the gross errors of the press which disfigured the discourse; being desirous, ere it descends to that oblivion which is the natural exit of such publications, of presenting it for once in an amended form, that it may at least be decently interred.

A SERMON.

JEREMIAH viii. 6.

I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

THOUGH we are well assured the Divine Being is attentive to the conduct of men at all times, yet it is but reasonable to believe he is peculiarly so whilst they are under his correcting hand. As *he does not willingly afflict the children of men*, he is wont to do it slowly, and at intervals, waiting, if we may so speak, to see whether the preceding chastisement will produce the sentiments which shall appease his anger, or those which shall confirm his resolution to punish. When sincere humiliation and sorrow for past offences takes place, his displeasure subsides, he relents and *repents himself of the evil.* Thus he speaks by the mouth of Jeremiah. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

We are this day assembled at the call of our Sovereign, to humble ourselves in the presence of Almighty God, under a sense of our sins, and to implore his interposition, that we may not be delivered into the hands of our enemies, nor fall a prey to the malice of those who hate us. It is surely, then, of the utmost consequence to see to it, that our humiliation be deep, our repentance sincere, and the dispositions we cherish,

as well as the resolutions we form, suitable to the nature of the crisis, and the solemnity of the occasion; such, in a word, as Omniscience will approve.

In the words of the text, the Lord reproaches the people of Israel with not speaking aright, and complains that, while he was waiting to hear the language of penitential sorrow and humiliation, he witnessed nothing but an insensibility to his reproofs, an obstinate perseverance in guilt, with a fatal eagerness to rush to their former courses. *He hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented himself of his iniquity, nor said, What have I done? But every one rushed to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.*

As the principles of the divine administration are invariable, and the situation of Great Britain, at this moment, not altogether unlike that of Israel at the time this portion of prophecy was penned, perhaps we cannot better improve the present solemnity, than by taking occasion, from the words before us, to point out some of those sentiments and views which appear in the present crisis not to be *right;* and, after exploding these, to endeavour to substitute more correct ones in their stead.

1. They who content themselves with tracing national judgments to their national causes, without looking higher, entertain a view of the subject very inadequate to the demands of the present season. When you have imputed to the effects of an unparalleled convulsion on the continent, to the relative situation of foreign powers, to the turbulent passions and insatiable ambition of an individual, the evils which threaten us, what have you done to mitigate those evils? What alleviation have you afforded to perplexity and distress? They still exist in all their force. Far be it from me to attempt to discourage political inquiry. An inquiry into the sources of great events, an attempt to develope the more hidden causes which influence, under God, the destiny of nations, is an exercise of the mental powers more noble than almost any other, inasmuch as it embraces the widest field, and grasps a chain whose links are the most numerous, complicated, and subtle. The most profound

political speculations, however, the most refined theories of government, though they establish the fame of their authors, will be found, perhaps, to have had very little influence on the happiness of nations. As the art of criticism never made an orator or a poet, though it enables us to judge of their merits, so the comprehensive speculation of modern times, which has reviewed and compared the manners and institutions of every age and country, has never formed a wise government or a happy people. It arrives too late for that purpose, since it owes its existence to an extensive survey of mankind, under a vast variety of forms, through all those periods of national improvement and decay, in which the happiest efforts of wisdom and policy have been already made. The welfare of a nation depends much less on the refined wisdom of the few, than on the manners and character of the many: and as moral and religious principles have the chief influence in forming that character, so an acknowledgment of the hand of God, a deep sense of his dominion, is amongst the first of those principles. While we attend to the operation of second causes, let us never forget that there is a Being placed above them, who can move and arrange them at pleasure, and in whose hands they never fail to accomplish the purposes of his unerring counsel. The honour of the Supreme Ruler requires that his supremacy should be acknowledged, his agency confessed; nor is there any thing which he more intends by his chastisements than to extort this confession, or any thing he more highly resents than an attempt to exclude him from the concerns of his own world. *Woe unto them* (saith Isaiah) *that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.** The same prophet complains, that while the hand of Jehovah was lifted up they would not see; but he adds, *they shall see.* If lighter chastisements

* Isaiah v. 11, 12.

will not suffice, he has heavier in reserve; if they despise his reproofs, he will *render his anger with fury, his rebukes with flames of fire.* He is resolved to overcome; and what must be the issue of a contest with Omnipotence, it is as easy to foresee as it is painful to contemplate.

2. They *speak not aright*, who, instead of placing their reliance on God for safety, repose only on an arm of flesh.—The perfect unanimity which prevails, the ardour to defend every thing dear to us, which is expressed by all classes; the sacrifices cheerfully made, the labours sustained, and the mighty preparations by sea and land, which the vigilance of government has set on foot to repel the enemy from our coasts, or insure his discomfiture should he arrive, must be highly satisfactory to every well-disposed mind. They afford, as far as human means can afford, a well-founded prospect of success. Though there is, on this account, no room to despond, but much, on the contrary, to lead us to anticipate a favourable issue to the contest; yet nothing, surely, can justify that language of extravagant boast, that proud confidence in our national force, without a dependence upon God, which, however fashionable it may be, is as remote from the dictates of true courage as of true piety. True courage is firm and unassuming; true piety, serious and humble. In the midst of all our preparations, we shall, if we are wise, repose our chief confidence in Him who has every element at his disposal; who can easily disconcert the wisest councils, confound the mightiest projects, and save, when he pleases, by many or by few. While the vanity of such a pretended reliance on Providence as supersedes the use of means is readily confessed, it is to be feared we are not sufficiently careful to guard against a contrary extreme, in its ultimate effects not less dangerous. It to depend on the interposition of Providence without human exertion, be to tempt God; to confide in an arm of flesh, without seeking his aid, is to deny him; the former is to be pitied for its weakness, the latter to be censured for its impiety; nor is it easy to say which

affords the worst omen of success. Let us avoid both these extremes; availing ourselves of all the resources which wisdom can suggest, or energy produce, let us still feel and acknowledge our absolute dependence upon God. With humble and contrite hearts, with filial confidence and affection, let us flee to his arms, that thus we may enjoy the united supports of reason and religion; and every principle, human and divine, may concur to assure us of our safety. Thus shall we effectually shun the denunciations so frequent and so terrible, contained in his holy word, against the vanity of human confidences. *Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.*

3. Their conduct is not to be approved, who, in the present crisis, indulge in *wanton* and *indiscriminate* censure of the measures of our rulers. I say *wanton* and *indiscriminate*, because the privilege of censuring, with moderation and decency, the measures of government, is essential to a free constitution; a privilege which can never lose its value in the eyes of the public, till it is licentiously abused. The temperate exercise of this privilege is a most useful restraint on those errors and excesses, to which the possession of power supplies a temptation. The free expression of the public voice is capable of overawing those who have nothing beside to apprehend; and the tribunal of public opinion is one whose decisions it is not easy for men in the most elevated stations to despise. To this we may add, that the unrestrained discussion of national affairs not only *gives weight* to the sentiments, but is eminently adapted to *enlighten the minds*, of a people; and, consequently, to increase that general fund of talent and information, from which the accomplishments, even of statesmen themselves, must be ultimately derived. While, therefore, we maintain this privilege with jealous care, let us be equally careful not to abuse it. There is a respect, in my apprehension, due to civil governors *on account of their office*, which we are not permitted to violate, even when we are under the necessity of blaming their measures. When the apostle Paul was betrayed into an

intemperate expression of anger against the Jewish High Priest, from an ignorance of the station he occupied, he was no sooner informed of this, than he apologized, and quoted a precept of the Mosaic law, which says, *Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.* In agreement with which, the New Testament subjoins to the duty of fearing God, that of honouring the king; and frequently and emphatically inculcates submission to civil rulers, not so much from a fear of their power, as from a respect for their office.

The ancient prophets, it is true, in the immediate discharge of their functions, appear to have treated kings and princes with no sort of ceremony. But, before we establish their style into a precedent, let us recollect they were privileged persons, speaking expressly in the name of the Most High, who gave them his words, and invested them, for the moment, with a portion of his majesty.

Apart from the personal character of rulers, which are fluctuating and variable, you will find the apostles continually enjoin respect to government, *as government*, as a permanent ordinance of God, susceptible of various modifications from human wisdom, but essential, under some form or other, to the existence of society; and affording a representation, faint and inadequate, it is true, but still a representation, of the dominion of God over the earth. The wisdom of resting the duty of submission on this ground is obvious. The possession of office forms a plain and palpable distinction, liable to no ambiguity or dispute. Personal merits, on the contrary, are easily contested, so that if the obligation of obedience were founded on these, it would have no kind of force, nor retain any sort of hold on the conscience; the bonds of social order might be dissolved by an epigram or a song. The more liberal sentiments of respect for institutions being destroyed, nothing would remain to insure tranquillity, but a servile fear of men. In the absence of those sentiments, as the mildest exertion of authority would be felt as an injury, authority would soon cease to be mild; and princes would have

no alternative but that of governing their subjects with the severe jealousy of a master over slaves impatient of revolt: so narrow is the boundary which separates a licentious freedom from a ferocious tyranny! How incomparably more noble, salutary, and just, are the maxims the apostles lay down on this subject. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God: whosoever resisteth, therefore, the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.* We shall do well to guard against any system which would withdraw the duties we owe to our rulers and to society from the jurisdiction of conscience; that principle of the mind, whose prerogative it is to prescribe to every other, and to pronounce that definitive sentence from which there is no appeal. A good man is accustomed to acquiesce in the idea of his duties as an ultimate object, without inquiring at every step why he should perform them, or amusing himself with imagining cases and situations in which they would be liable to limitations and exceptions. Instead of being curious after these, (for I do not deny that such exceptions exist,) let the great general duty of submission to civil authority be engraven on our hearts, wrought into the very habit of the mind, and make a part of our elementary morality.

At this season especially, when unanimity is so requisite, every endeavour to excite discontent, by reviling the character, or depreciating the talents, of those who are intrusted with the administration, is highly criminal. Without suspicion of flattery, we may be permitted to add, that their zeal in the service of their country cannot be questioned; that the vast preparations they have made for our defence claim our gratitude; and

that if, in a situation so arduous, and in the management of affairs so complicated and difficult, they have committed mistakes, they are amply entitled to a candid construction of their measures.

Having been detained by these reflections somewhat longer than was intended, it is high time to return to those religious considerations which are more immediately appropriate to the present season. I therefore proceed to add,

4. That they appear to entertain mistaken sentiments, who rely with too much confidence for success on our supposed superiority in virtue to our enemies. Such a confidence betrays inattention to the actual conduct of Providence. Wherever there is conscious guilt, there is room to apprehend punishment; nor is it for the criminal to decide where the merited punishment shall first fall. The cup of divine displeasure is, indeed, presented successively to guilty nations, but it by no means invariably begins with those who have run the greatest career in guilt. On the contrary, *judgment* often *begins at the house of God;* and he frequently chastises his servants with severity before he proceeds to the destruction of his enemies. He assured Abraham, his seed should be afflicted in Egypt for four hundred years, and that after their expiration, *the nation that afflicted them he would judge.* The Assyrian monarchs, blind and impious idolaters, were permitted for a long period to oppress his chosen people; after which, to use his own words, *he punished the fruit of the proud heart of the king of Babylon;* and having accomplished his design in their correction, cast the rod into the fire. His conduct, on such occasions, resembles that of a parent, who, full of solicitude for the welfare of his children, animadverts upon faults in *them*, which he suffers to pass without notice in persons for whom he is less interested. Let us adore both the goodness and severity of God. The punishments which are designed to amend, are inflicted with comparative vigilance and speed; those which are meant to destroy are usually long suspended, while the devoted victims pass on with seeming impunity.

But, independent of this consideration, that superiority in virtue which is claimed, may be neither so great, nor so certain, as we are ready at first to suppose. To decide on the comparative guilt of two individuals, much more of two nations, demands a more comprehensive knowledge of circumstances than we are usually able to obtain. To settle a question of this sort, it is not enough barely to inspect the manners of each; for the quality of actions, considered in themselves, is one thing; and the comparative guilt of the persons to whom they belong, is another. Before we can determine such a question, it is necessary to weigh and estimate the complicated influences to which they are exposed, the tendency of all their institutions, their respective degrees of information, and the comparative advantages and disadvantages under which they are placed. And who is equal to such a survey, but the Supreme Judge, to whom it belongs to decide on the character both of nations and individuals?

Our enemies, it is true, in the moments of anarchy and madness, treated the religion of Jesus with an ostentation of insult; but it was not till that religion had been disguised, and almost concealed from their view under a veil of falsehoods and impostures. The religion they rejected, debased by foreign infusions, mingled with absurd tenets, trifling superstitions, and cruel maxims, retained scarce any traces of the *truth as it is in Jesus.* The best of men were compelled to flee their country to avoid its persecuting fury, while the *souls under the altar* were employed day and night in accusing it before God. Religious inquiry was suppressed, the perusal of the word of God discountenanced, or rather prohibited, and that book, to loose whose seals the Lamb condescended to be slain, impiously closed by those who styled themselves its ministers. In this situation, it is less surprising if the body of the people,* misled by pretended philosophers, lost

* The author begs this remark may be understood to apply to the French people only, and not by any means to their infidel leaders. Of the infidelity of the latter there needs no other solution than the scripture one: *They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

sight of the feeble glimmerings of light which shone in the midst of so much obscurity. How far these considerations may extenuate, before the searcher of hearts, the guilt of our enemies, it remains with him to determine. It is certain, our guilt is accompanied with no such extenuation. With us the darkness has long been past, and the true light has arisen upon us. We have long possessed the clearest display of divine truth, together with the fullest liberty of conscience. The mysteries of the gospel have been unveiled, and its sanctifying truths pressed on the conscience by those *who, having received such a ministry*, know it to be their duty *to use great plainness of speech.*

The language of invective, it is acknowledged, should be as carefully avoided in dispensing the word of God as that of adulation; but may we not, without reprehension, ask whether it is not a melancholy truth, that many of us have continued in the midst of all this light, unchanged and impenitent; that if our enemies, with frantic impiety, renounced the forms of religion, we remain destitute of the power; and that, if they abandoned the christian name, the name is nearly the whole of christianity to which we can pretend? Still we are ready perhaps to exclaim, with the people of Israel in the context, *We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us!* Let us hear the prophet's reply. *Surely in vain hath he made it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.* That law is most emphatically in vain, which is the subject of boast without being obeyed. That dispensation of religion, however perfect, is in vain, which cherishes the pride, without reforming the manners of a people. Were we, indeed, a religious people, were the traces of christianity as visible in our lives as they are in our creeds and confessions, we might derive solid support from the comparison of ourselves with others; but if the contrary be the fact, and *there are with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God,* it will be our wisdom to relinquish this plea; and instead of boasting our superior virtue, to lie low in humiliation and repentance.

5. General lamentations and acknowledgments of the

corruptions of the age, be they ever so well founded, fall very short of the real duties of this season.—It is not difficult, however painful to a good mind, to descant on the luxury, the venality, the impiety of the age, the irreligion of the rich, the immorality of the poor, and the general forgetfulness of God which pervades all classes. Such topics it would be utterly improper to exclude: but to dwell on these alone, answers very little purpose. The sentiments they excite are too vague and indistinct to make a lasting impression. To invest ourselves with an imaginary character, to represent the nation to which we belong, and combining into one group the vices of the times, to utter loud lamentations, or violent invectives, is an easy task.

But this, whatever it be, is not repentance. After bewailing in this manner the sins of others, it is possible to continue quite unconcerned about our own. He who has been thus employed, may have been merely acting a part, uttering confessions in which he never meant to take a personal share. He would be mortally offended, perhaps, to have it suspected that he himself had been guilty of any one of the sins he has been deploring, or that he had contributed in the smallest degree to draw down the judgments he so solemnly deprecates. All has been transacted under a feigned character. Instead of *repenting himself of his iniquity, or saying, What have I done?* he secretly prides himself on his exemption from the general stain; and all the advantage he derives from his humiliations and confessions, is to become more deeply enamoured of the perfections of what he supposes his real character. To such I would say, you are under a dangerous delusion; and the manner in which you perform the duties of this season completes that delusion. Your repentance, your feigned, your theatrical repentance, tends to fix you in impenitence, and your humiliation to make you proud. Whatever opinion you may entertain of the character of others, your chief concern is at home. When you have broken off your own sins by righteousness, you may, with a more perfect propriety, deplore the sins of the

nation; you may intercede for it in your prayers, and, within the limits of your sphere, edify it by your example; but till you have taken this first, this necessary step, you have done nothing; and should the whole nation follow your example, and copy the spirit of your devotion, we should, after all, remain an impenitent, and finally a ruined people.

Allow me here, though it may be a digression, to en deavour the correction of a mistake, which appears to me to have greatly perplexed, as well as abridged, the duties of similar seasons to the present. The mistake to which I allude respects the true idea of *national sin*. Many seem to take it for granted that nothing can justly be deemed a *national sin*, but what has the sanction of the legislature, or is committed under public authority. When they hear, therefore, of national sins, they instantly revolve in their minds something which they apprehend to be criminal in the conduct of public affairs. That iniquity when established by law is more conspicuous, that it tends to a more general corruption, and by poisoning the streams of justice at their source, produces more extensive mischief than under any other circumstances, it is impossible to deny. In a country, moreover, where the people have a voice in the government, the corruption of their laws must first have inhered, and become inveterate in their manners.

Such corruption is therefore not so much an *instance* as a *monument* of national degeneracy; but it by no means follows that this is the only just idea of national sins. National sins are the sins of the nation. The system which teaches us to consider a people as acting merely through the medium of its prince or legislature, however useful or necessary to adjust the intercourse of nations with each other, is too technical, too artificial, too much of a compromise with the imperfection essential to human affairs, to enter into the views, or regulate the conduct, of the Supreme Being. He sees things as they are; and as the greater part of the crimes committed in every country are perpetrated by its inhabitants in their individual character, it is these, though not to the

exclusion of others, which chiefly provoke the divine judgments.

To consider national sins as merely comprehending the vices of rulers, or the iniquities tolerated by law, is to place the duties of such a season as this in a very *invidious* and a very *inadequate* light. It is to render them invidious: for upon this principle our chief business on such occasions is, to single out for attack those whom we are commanded to obey, to descant on public abuses, and to hold up to detestation and abhorrence the supposed delinquencies of the government under which we are placed. How far such a conduct tends to promote that broken and contrite heart which is heaven's best sacrifice, it requires no great sagacity to discover.

It is, moreover, to exhibit a most *inadequate* view of the duties of this season. It confines humiliation and confession to a mere scantling of the sins which pollute a nation. Under the worst governments (to say nothing of our own) the chief perversions of right are not found in courts of justice, nor the chief outrages on virtue in the laws, nor the greatest number of atrocities in the public administration. Civil government, the great antidote which the wisdom of man has applied to the crimes and disorders that spring up in society, can scarcely ever become, in no free country at least is it possible for it to become, *itself* the chief crime and disorder. It may, on occasion, prescribe *particular things* that are wrong, and sometimes reward where it ought to punish; but unless it bent its force, for the most part, to the encouragement of virtue and the suppression of vice; unless the general spirit of its laws were in unison with the dictates of conscience, it would soon fall to pieces from intestine weakness and disorder.

A last appeal, in all moral questions, lies to the Scriptures, where you will invariably find the prophets, in their boldest paintings of national vice, in their severest denunciations of divine anger, are so far from confining their representation to the conduct of rulers, that they are seldom mentioned in comparison of the people. Their attention is chiefly occupied in depicting the cor-

ruptions which prevailed in the several classes of the community, among which the crimes of princes and judges are most severely reprehended, not as representatives, but as parts of the whole. They knew nothing of that refinement by which a people are at liberty to transfer their vices to their rulers. To confirm this remark, by adducing all the instances the prophecies afford, would be to quote a great part of the Old Testament: it is sufficient to refer you to the twenty-second chapter of Ezekiel, where, after portraying the manners of the age with the peculiar vehemence of style which distinguished that holy prophet, he closes his description with these remarkable words: *And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.*

Let us not deceive ourselves with vain words. The just displeasure of God, as it will by no means spare the great, when they are criminal and impenitent, so neither is it excited by their wickedness alone. It is a fire supplied from innumerable sources, to which every crime contributes its quota; and which every portion of guilt, wherever it is found, causes to burn with augmented violence.

Having thus endeavoured to expose those grounds of confidence which appear replete with danger, it will not be necessary to dwell long on the remaining part of the subject. To be aware of the several wrong paths into which we are liable to be misled, is the principal requisite to the finding out that which is alone the true and right one.

The first duty to which our situation summons us, is a devout acknowledgment of the hand of God. To this, whatever be the instruments employed, religion instructs us ultimately to refer national calamities as well as national blessings. *That the Lord reigns*, is one of those truths which lie at the very basis of piety; nor is there any more consoling. It fills the heart, under a right impression of it, with a cheerful hope, and unruffled tranquillity, amidst the changes and trials of

life, which we shall look for in vain from any other quarter. It is this chiefly which formed and distinguished the character of those who are emphatically said to have *walked with God.* Important as this disposition is, under all circumstances, it is what more especially suits the present crisis, and which the events we have witnessed are so eminently calculated to impress. The Psalmist accounts for the wicked's refusing to seek after God, from their having no changes; and certainly an uninterrupted series of prosperity is not favourable to piety. But if *we* forget God, we cannot plead even this slight extenuation; for the times that are *passing over us*, in the solemn phrase of Scripture, are eventful beyond all former example or conception. The fearful catastrophes, the strange vicissitudes, the sudden revolutions of fortune, which, thinly scattered heretofore over a long tract of ages, poets and historians have collected, and exhibited to the terror and the commiseration of mankind, have crowded upon us with so strange a rapidity, and thickened so fast, that they have become perefectly familiar, and are almost numbered among ordinary events. Astonishment has exhausted itself; and whatever occurs, we cease to be surprised. In short, every thing around us, in the course of a few years, is so changed, that did not the stability of the material, form a contrast to the fluctuations of the moral and political world, we might be tempted to suppose we had been removed to another state, or that all those things that have happened were but the illusions of fancy, and the visions of the night. How consoling, at such a season, to look up to that Being, *who is a very present help in trouble, the dwelling-place of all generations;* who changes all things, and is himself unchanged! And, independent of its impiety, how cruel is that philosophy which, under pretence of superior illumination, by depriving us of this resource, would leave us exposed to the tossings of a tempestuous ocean, without compass, without solace, and without hope!

But besides this acknowledgment of the general administration of the Deity, it behoves us to feel and con-

fess, in national calamities, the tokens of his displeasure. The evils which overtake nations are the just judgements of the Almighty. I am perfectly aware of the disadvantages under which we labour, when we insist on this topic, from its being so trite and familiar. Instead of troubling you with a general, and, I fear, unavailing descant on the manners of the age, I shall, therefore, content myself with calling your attention to a very few of what appear to me the most alarming symptoms of national degeneracy. Here we shall not insist so much on the progress of infidelity (though much to be deplored), as on an evil, to which, if we are not greatly mistaken, that progress is chiefly to be ascribed: I mean a gradual departure from the peculiar truths, maxims, and spirit of Christianity. Christianity, issuing perfect and entire from the hands of its Author, will admit of no mutilations nor improvements; it stands most secure on its own basis; and without being indebted to foreign aids, supports itself best by its own internal vigour. When, under the pretence of simplifying it, we attempt to force it into a closer alliance with the most approved systems of philosophy, we are sure to contract its bounds, and to diminish its force and authority over the consciences of men. It is dogmatic; not capable of being advanced with the progress of science, but fixed and immutable. We may not be able to perceive the use or necessity of some of its discoveries, but they are not on this account the less binding on our faith; just as there are many parts of nature,* whose purposes we are at a loss to explore, of which if any person were bold enough

* "We ought not (says the great Bacon) to attempt to draw down or submit the mysteries of God to our reason; but, on the contrary, to raise and advance our reason to the divine truth. In this part of knowledge, touching divine philosophy, I am so far from noting any deficiency, that I rather note an excess; whereto I have digressed, because of the extreme prejudice which both religion and philosophy have received from being *commixed together*, as that which undoubtedly will make an heretical religion and a fabulous philosophy."

This observation appears to me to deserve the most profound meditation; and lest the remarks on this subject should appear presumptuous from so inconsiderable a person, I thought it requisite to fortify myself by so great an authority.

to arraign the propriety, it would be sufficient to reply that God made them. They are both equally the works of God, and both equally partake of the mysteriousness of their Author. This *integrity* of the Christian faith has been insensibly impaired; and the simplicity of mind with which it should be embraced, gradually diminished. While the outworks of the sanctuary have been defended with the utmost ability, its interior has been too much neglected, and the fire upon the altar suffered to languish and decay. The truths and mysteries which distinguished the christian from all other religions, have been little attended to by some, totally denied by others; and while infinite efforts have been made, by the utmost subtlety of argumentation, to establish the truth and authenticity of revelation, few have been exerted in comparison to show what it really contains. The doctrines of the fall and of redemption, which are the two grand points on which the Christian dispensation hinges, have been too much neglected. Though it has not yet become the fashion (God forbid it ever should!) to deny them, we have been too much accustomed to confine the mention of them to oblique hints, and distant allusions. They are too often reluctantly conceded rather than warmly inculcated, as though they were the weaker or less honourable parts of christianity, from which we were in haste to turn away our eyes, although it is in reality these very truths which have in every age inspired the devotion of the church, and the rapture of the redeemed. This alienation from the distinguishing truths of our holy religion accounts for a portentous peculiarity among christians, their being ashamed of a book which they profess to receive as the word of God. The votaries of all other religions regard their supposed sacred books with a devotion which consecrates their errors, and makes their very absurdities venerable in their eyes. They glory in that which is their shame: we are ashamed of that which is our glory. Indifference and inattention to the truths and mysteries of revelation, have led, by an easy transition, to a dislike and neglect of the book which contains them; so that, in a christian country, nothing is thought so vulgar as a

serious appeal to the Scriptures; and the candidate for fashionable distinction would rather betray a familiar acquaintance with the most impure writers, than with the words of Christ and his apostles. Yet we complain of the growth of infidelity, when nothing less could be expected than that some should declare themselves infidels, where so many had completely forgot they were christians. They who sow the seed can with very ill grace complain of the abundance of the crop; and when we have ourselves ceased to abide in the words and maintain the honour of the Saviour, we must not be surprised at seeing some advance a step further, by openly declaring they are none of his. The consequence has been such as might be expected,—an increase of profaneness, immorality, and irreligion.

The traces of piety have been wearing out more and more, from our conversation, from our manners, from our popular publications, from the current literature of the age. In proportion as the maxims and spirit of christianity have declined, infidelity has prevailed in their room; for infidelity is, in reality, nothing more than a noxious spawn (pardon the metaphor) bred in the stagnant marshes of corrupted christianity.

A lax theology is the natural parent of a lax morality. The peculiar motives, accordingly, by which the inspired writers enforce their moral lessons, the love of God and the Redeemer, concern for the honour of religion, and gratitude for the inestimable benefits of the christian redemption, have no place in the fashionable systems of moral instruction.* The motives almost exclusively urged are such as take their rise from the present state, founded on reputation, on honour, on health, or on the tendency of the things recommended to promote, under some form or other, the acquisition of worldly advantages. Thus even morality itself, by dissociating it from religion, is made to cherish the love of the world, and to bar

* If the reader wishes for a further statement and illustration of these melancholy facts, he may find it in Mr. Wilberforce's celebrated book on religion; an inestimable work, which has, perhaps, done more than any other to rouse the insensibility and augment the piety of the age.

the heart more effectually against the approaches of piety.

Here I cannot forbear remarking a great change which has taken place in the whole manner of reasoning on the topics of morality and religion, from what prevailed in the last century, and, as far as my information extends, in any preceding age. This, which is an age of revolutions, has also produced a strange revolution in the method of viewing these subjects, the most important by far that can engage the attention of man. The simplicity of our ancestors, nourished by "the sincere milk of the word," rather than by the tenets of a disputatious philosophy, was content to let morality remain on the firm basis of the dictates of conscience and the will of God They considered virtue as something *ultimate*, as bounding the mental prospect. They never supposed for a moment there was anything to which it stood merely in the relation of a *means*, or, that within the narrow confines of this momentary state any thing great enough could be found to be its *end* or *object*. It never occurred to their imagination, that that religion which professes to render us superior to the world, is in reality nothing more than an instrument to procure the temporal, the physical good of individuals, or of society. In their view, it had a nobler destination; it looked forward to eternity: and if ever they appear to have assigned it any end or object beyond itself, it was a union with its Author, in the perpetual fruition of God. They arranged these things in the following order:—Religion, comprehending the love, fear, and service of the Author of our being, they placed first; social morality, founded on its dictates, confirmed by its sanctions, next; and the mere physical good of society they contemplated as subordinate to both. Every thing is now reversed. The pyramid is inverted: the first is last, and the last first. Religion is degraded from its pre-eminence, into the mere hand-maid of social morality; social morality into an instrument of advancing the welfare of society; and the world is all in all. Nor have we deviated less from the example of antiquity than from that of our pious forefathers. The philosophers of

antiquity, in the absence of superior light, consulted with reverence the permanent principles of nature, the dictates of conscience, and the best feelings of the heart, which they employed all the powers of reason and eloquence to unfold, to adorn, to enforce; and thereby formed a luminous commentary *on the law written on the heart.* The virtue which they inculcated grew out of the stock of human nature: it was a warm and living virtue. It was the moral man, possessing in every limb and feature, in all its figure and movements, the harmony, dignity, and variety which belong to the human form: an effort of unassisted nature to restore that image of God, which sin had mutilated and defaced. Imperfect, as might be expected, their morality was often erroneous; but in its great outlines it had all the stability of the human constitution, and its fundamental principles were coeval and coexistent with human nature. There could be nothing fluctuating and arbitrary in its more weighty decisions, since it appealed every moment to *the man within the breast:* it pretended to nothing more than to give voice and articulation to the inward sentiments of the heart, and conscience echoed to its oracles. This, wrought into different systems, and under various modes of illustration, was the general mode which morality exhibited from the creation of the world till our time. In this state revelation found it; and, correcting what was erroneous, supplying what was defective, and confirming what was right by its peculiar sanctions, superadded a number of supernatural truths and holy mysteries. How is it, that on a subject on which men have thought deeply from the moment they began to think, and where, consequently, whatever is entirely and fundamentally new, must be fundamentally false; how is it, that in contempt of the experience of past ages, and of all precedents human and divine, we have ventured into a perilous path which no eye has explored, no foot has trod, and have undertaken, after the lapse of six thousand years, to *manufacture* a morality of our own, to decide by a cold calculation of interest, by a ledger-book of profit and of loss, the preference of truth to falsehood, of piety to

blasphemy, and of humanity and justice to treachery and blood?

In the science of morals we are taught by this system to consider nothing as yet done; we are invited to erect a fresh fabric on a fresh foundation. All the elements and sentiments which entered into the essence of virtue before, are melted down and cast into a new mould. Instead of appealing to any internal principle, every thing is left to calculation, and determined by expediency. In executing this plan, the jurisdiction of conscience is abolished, her decisions are classed with those of a superannuated judge, and the determination of moral causes is adjourned from the interior tribunal to the noisy forum of speculative debate. Every thing, without exception, is made an affair of calculation, under which are comprehended, not merely the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, but even the love and adoration which the Supreme Being claims at our hands. His claims are set aside, or suffered to lie in abeyance, until it can be determined how far they can be admitted on the principles of expediency, and in what respect they may interfere with the acquisition of temporal advantages. Even here, nothing is yielded to the suggestions of conscience, nothing to the movements of the heart: all is dealt out with a sparing hand, under the stint and measure of calculation. Instead of being allowed to "love God with all our heart, and all our strength, the first and great commandment," the portion of love assigned him is weighed out with the utmost scrupulosity, and the supposed excess more severely censured than the real deficiency.

Thus, by a strange inversion, the *indirect influence* of christianity, in promoting the temporal good of mankind, is mistaken for its *principal end;* the skirts of her robe are confounded with her body, and the *powers of the world to come*, instead of raising our thoughts and contemplations from earth to heaven, from the creature to the Creator, are made subservient to the advancement of secular interests and passions. How far these sentiments accord with the dictates of inspiration, the most unlettered

christian may easily decide. *Love not the world*, said the disciple who leaned on the breast of his Lord, *neither the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* Such was the idea entertained by an inspired apostle of christian virtue. Let us now turn to the modern philosopher. Virtue, he will inform us (including the whole sum of our duties), is merely an expedient for promoting the interests and advantages of the present world; of that world, which, in the eyes of John, was passing away, and whose value he so solemnly depreciates. What admirable consistency! What elevated theology! If we can suppose this holy apostle acquainted with what passes on earth, what pleasure it must afford his glorified spirit, to find his sentiments so well understood, and so faithfully interpreted!

In former times it was supposed that one of the most effectual means of improvement in virtue was, the moral culture of the heart; and *to keep it with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life*, was thought an advice deserving the most serious attention. To examine frequently the state of the conscience, and to check the first risings of disorder there, was judged to be of the last importance.

It is easy to see how this moral discipline must fare under the doctrine of expediency, a doctrine which teaches man to be looking continually abroad: a doctrine which not only justifies, but enjoins, a distrust of the suggestions of the inward monitor; which will not permit the best feelings of the heart, its clearest dictates, its finest emotions, to have the smallest influence over the conduct; and, instead of yielding any thing to their direction, cites them at its bar.

As this fashion of reducing every moral question to a calculation of expedience is a most important innovation, it would be strange if it had not produced a change in the manners of society. In fact, it *has* produced an entirely new cast of character, equally remote from the licentious gaiety of high life, and the low profligacy which

falls under the lash of the law: a race of men distinguished by a calm and terrible ferocity, resembling Cæsar in this only, that, as it was said of him, they have come with sobriety to the ruin of their country. The greatest crimes no longer issue from the strongest passions, but from the coolest head. Vice and impiety have made a new conquest, and have added the regions of speculation to their dominion. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness have put on the cloak of the philosopher: maxims the most licentious have found their way into books of pretended morality, and have been inculcated with the airs of a moral sage.* The new doctrine having withdrawn the attention from all internal sentiments, as well as destroyed their authority, the distinction between right and wrong was easily lost sight of, the boundaries of vice and virtue confounded, and the whole substance of morals fell a prey to contending disputants. Nor is this the only or the worst consequence which has followed. A callous indifference to all moral distinctions is an almost inseparable effect of the familiar application of this theory. Virtue is no longer contemplated as the object of any particular *sentiment* or *feeling*, but solely with regard to its effects on society: it is what it *produces*, not what *it is*, that is alone considered, just as an accountant is indifferent to the *shape* and *appearance* of the figures, and attends simply to their amount. Crimes and virtues are equally *candidates* for approbation, nor must the heart betray the least preference, which would be to prejudge the cause; but must maintain a sacred neutrality, till Expedience, whose hand never trembles in the midst of the greatest horrors, has weighed in her impartial balance their consequences and effects. In the mean time, they are equally *candidates*, we assert it again, for our approbation, and equally entitled to it, provided the passions can be deceived into an opinion, and this is not difficult, that they will come to the same thing at the foot of the account. Hence that intrepidity in guilt, which has cased the hearts of the greatest adepts in this

* The unholy speculations of Mr. Godwin were founded entirely on this basis.

system, as with triple brass. Its seeds were sown by some of these with an unsparing hand in France, a congenial soil, where they produced a thick vegetation. The consequences were soon felt. The fabric of society tottered to its base, the earth shook under their feet; the heavens were involved in darkness, and a voice more audible than thunder called upon them to desist. But, unmoved amidst the uproar of elements, undismayed by that voice which astonishes nature and appals the guilty, these men continued absorbed in their calculations. Instead of revering the judgements, or confessing the finger of God, they only made more haste (still on the principle of expediency) to desolate his works, and destroy his image, as if they were apprehensive the shades of a premature night might fall and cover their victims!

But it is time to conclude this discussion, which has, perhaps, already fatigued by its length. I cannot help expressing my apprehension, that this desecration of virtue, this incessant domination of physical over moral ideas, of ideas of expedience over those of right, having already dethroned religion, and displaced virtue from her ancient basis, will, if it is suffered to proceed, ere long shake the foundation of states, and endanger the existence of the civilized world. Should it ever become popular; should it ever descend from speculation into common life, and become the practical morality of the age, we may apply to such a period the awful words of Balaam; *Who shall live when God doth this?* No imagination can portray, no mind can grasp its horrors; nor, when the angel in the Apocalypse, to whom the keys are intrusted, shall be commissioned to open the bottomless pit, will it send forth a thicker cloud of pestilential vapour. If the apparent simplicity of this system be alleged in its favour, I would say, it is the simplicity of meanness, a simplicity which is its shame, a daylight which reveals its beggary. If an air of obscurity, on the contrary, is objected against that of better times, let it be remembered that every science has its *ultimate questions*, boundaries which cannot be passed; and that if these occur earlier in morals than in other inquiries, it

is the natural result of the immensity of the subject, which touching human nature in every point, and surrounding it on all sides, renders it difficult, or rather impossible, to trace it in all its relations, and view it in all its extent. Meanwhile, the shades which envelope, and will perhaps always envelope it in some measure, are not without their use, since they teach the two most important lessons we can learn,—the vanity of our reason, and the grandeur of our destiny.

It is not improbable some may be offended at the warmth and freedom of these remarks: my apology, however, rests on the infinite importance of the subject, my extreme solicitude to impress what appear to me right sentiments respecting it, together with the consideration, that the confidence which ill becomes the innovators of yesterday, however able, may be pardoned in the defenders, however weak, of a system which has stood the test and sustained the virtue of two thousand years.* Let

* The system which founds morality on utility, an utility, let it be *always* remembered, confined to the purposes of the present world, issued with ill omen from the school of infidelity. It was first broached, I believe, certainly first brought into general notice, by Mr. Hume, in his Treatise on Morals, which he himself pronounced *incomparably the best* he ever wrote. It was incomparably the best for his purpose; nor is it easy to imagine a mind so acute as his did not see the effect it would have in setting morality and religion afloat, and substituting for the stability of principle the looseness of speculation and opinion. It has since been rendered popular by a succession of eminent writers; by one especially (I doubt not with intentions very foreign from those of Mr. Hume), whose great services to religion in other respects, together with my high reverence for his talents, prevent me from naming him. This venerable author, it is probable, little suspected to what lengths the principle would be carried, or to what purposes it would be applied in other hands. Had he foreseen this, I cannot but imagine he would have spared this part of his acute speculations.

We have, happily, preserved to us, from antiquity, two complete Treatises on Morals, in which the authors profess to give us a complete view of our duties; the one composed by the greatest master of reason, the other of eloquence, the world ever saw. The first of these has distinguished, classified, and arranged the elements of *social morality*, which is all he could reach in the absence of revelation, with that acuteness, subtlety, and precision, for which he was so eminently distinguished. Whoever attentively peruses his Treatise, the Nicomachian Morals, I mean, will find a perpetual reference to the inward sentiments of the breast. He builds every thing on the human constitution. He all along takes it for granted, that there is a moral impress on the

us return, then, to the safe and sober paths of our ancestors; adhering, in all moral questions, to the dictates of conscience, regulated and informed by the divine word; happy to enjoy, instead of sparks of our own kindling, the benefit of those luminaries which, placed in the moral firmament by a potent hand, have guided the church from the beginning, in her mysterious sojourn to eternity. *Stand in the way, and see; and ask for the old path, which is the good way, and walk therein; and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

Instead of demolishing the temple of christian virtue, from a presumptuous curiosity to inspect its foundations, let us rejoice that they are laid too deep for our scrutiny. Let us *worship* in it; and, along with the *nations of them that are saved, walk in its light.*

Having endeavoured to point out the source of our degeneracy, in a departure from the doctrines and spirit of christianity, I hasten to despatch the remainder of this discourse; nor will it detain you long.

mind, to which, without looking abroad, we may safely appeal. In a word, Aristotle never lost the moralist in the accountant. He has been styled the interpreter of Nature, and has certainly shown himself a most able commentator on the *law written on the heart*. For Cicero, in all his philosophical works, as well as in his Offices, where he treats more directly on these subjects, he shows the most extreme solicitude, as though he had a prophetic glance of what was to happen, to keep the moral and natural world apart, to assert the supremacy of virtue, and to recognize those sentiments and vestiges from which he educes, with the utmost elevation, the *contempt of human things*. How humiliating the consideration, that, with superior advantages, our moral systems should be infinitely surpassed in warmth and grandeur by those of Pagan times; and that the most jejune and comfortless that ever entered the mind of man, and the most abhorrent from the spirit of religion, should have ever become popular in a christian country! This departure from the precedents of antiquity will not, by those who are capable of forming a judgement, be easily imputed to the superiority of our talents; it is rather the result of that tendency to *degradation* which has long marked our progress. Along with the simplicity of faith and a reverence for the Scriptures, our respect for the dignity (rightly understood) of human nature, and tenderness for its best interests, have been gradually impaired. A fearlessness of consequences, a hardihood of mind, a disposition to sacrifice every thing to originality, or to a pretended philosophical precision, have succeeded in their place. This, in my humble opinion, has been the great bane of modern speculation, and has rendered so much of it wild, ferocious, and destructive.

Whoever has paid attention to the manners of the day, must have perceived a remarkable innovation in the use of moral terms, in which we have receded more and more from the spirit of christianity. Of this the term employed to denote a lofty sentiment of personal superiority supplies an obvious instance. In the current language of the times, *pride* is scarcely ever used but in a favourable sense. It will perhaps, be thought the mere change of a term is of little consequence; but, be it remembered that any remarkable innovation in the use of moral terms, betrays a proportionable change in the ideas and feelings they are intended to denote. As pride has been transferred from the list of vices to that of virtues, so humility, as a natural consequence, has been excluded, and is rarely suffered to enter into the praise of a character we wish to commend; although it was the leading feature in that of the Saviour of the world, and is still the leading characteristic of his religion; while there is no vice, on the contrary, against which the denunciations are so frequent as pride. Our conduct in this instance is certainly rather extraordinary, both in what we have embraced, and in what we have rejected; and it will surely be confessed, we are somewhat unfortunate in having selected that vice as a particular object of approbation, which God had already selected as the especial mark at which he aims the thunder-bolts of his vengeance.

Another symptom of degeneracy appears in the growing disregard to the external duties of religion; the duties more especially of the Lord's-day, and of public worship. It is supposed by such as have the best means of information, that throughout the kingdom, the number who regularly assemble for worship is far inferior to those who neglect it; that in our great towns and cities they are not one-fourth of the people, and in the metropolis a much smaller proportion. It is easy to foresee how the leisure afforded by the christian sabbath will be employed by those who utterly forget the design of its institution. It is somewhat remarkable that here the extremes meet, and that the public duties of religion are

most slighted by the highest and the lowest classes of society; by the former, I fear, from indolence and pride; by the latter from ignorance and profligacy.

Too many of the first description, when they do attend, it is in such a manner as makes it evident they esteem it merely an act of condescension, to which they submit as an example to their inferiors, who, penetrating their design, and imitating their indifference rather than their devotion, are disgusted with a religion which they perceive has no hold on their superiors, and is only imposed upon themselves as a badge of inferiority and a muzzle of restraint. Could the rich and noble be prevailed upon for a moment to attend to the instructions of their Lord, instead of making their elevated rank a reason for neglecting these duties, they would learn that there are none to whom they are so necessary; since there are none whose situation is so perilous, whose responsibility is so great, and whose salvation is so arduous.

Here fidelity compels me to advert to a circumstance, which I mention with sincere reluctance, because it implies something like a censure on the conduct of those whom it is our duty to respect. You are, probably, aware I mean the assigning part of the Sunday to *military exercises*. When we consider how important an institution the christian sabbath is, how essential to the maintenance of public worship, which is itself essential to religion, and what a barrier it opposes to the impiety and immorality of the age; is it not to be lamented that it should ever have been, in the smallest degree, infringed by legislative authority? The rest of the sabbath had been already too much violated, its duties too much neglected; but this is the first instance of the violation of it being publicly recommended and enjoined,* at a time too when we are engaged with an enemy whose very name conveys a warning against impiety. Our places of worship have been thinned by the absence of those who have been employed in military evolu-

* The Book of Sports, in the reign of James the First, is not an exception, as that, though sufficiently censurable, was not considered as a violation of the sabbath, considered as a day of *rest*.

tions, and of a still greater number of gazers, whom such spectacles attract. Nor is the time lost from religious duties so much to be considered, as that tumult and hurry of mind, utterly incompatible with devotion, which are inseparable from military ideas and preparations. Surely it could never have been the intention of the legislature, though such has been the effect, to detach the defenders of their country from the worshippers of God: nor is it to be supposed they adverted to the influence which a precedent of such high authority must have in divesting the sabbath of its sanctity in the eyes of the people, and of establishing the fatal epoch whence it was no longer to be revered as the ordinance of heaven. They had, we believe, no such intention; but the innocence of the intention abates nothing of the mischief of the precedent.

As it is foreign from my purpose to make a complete enumeration of national sins, which would not only be a most painful task in itself, but quite incompatible with the limits of this discourse, I shall content myself with the mention of one more proof of the degeneracy of our manners. This proof is found in that almost universal profaneness which taints our daily intercourse, and which has risen to such a height as to have become a melancholy characteristic of our country. In no nation under heaven, probably, has the profanation of sacred terms been so prevalent as in this christian land. The name even of the Supreme Being himself, and the words he has employed to denounce the punishments of the impenitent, are rarely mentioned but in anger or in sport; so that were a stranger to our history to witness the style of our conversation, he would naturally infer we considered religion as a detected imposture; and that nothing more remained than, in return for the fears it had inspired, to treat it with the insult and derision due to a fallen tyrant. It is difficult to account for a practice, which gratifies no passion, and promotes no interest, unless we ascribe it to a certain vanity of appearing superior to religious fear, which tempts men to make bold with their Maker. If there are hypocrites in religion, there are also, strange

as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety, men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to lie at the root of profane swearing. It may not be improper to remind such as indulge this practice, that they need not insult their Maker to show that they do not fear him; that they may relinquish this vice without danger of being supposed to be devout, and that they may safely leave it to other parts of their conduct to efface the smallest suspicion of their piety.* To view this practice in the most favourable light, it indicates, as has been observed by a great living writer,† "a mind over which religious considerations have little influence." It also sufficiently accounts for that propensity to ridicule piety, which is one of our national peculiarities. It would be uncandid to suppose, that at the best times there was more piety on the continent than here: be this as it may, it never appears to have exposed its possessors to contempt; nor was the sublime devotion of Fenelon and of Pascal ever considered as forming a shade to their genius. The reverence for religion had not been worn away by the familiar abuse of its peculiar terms.

It will be expected something should be said on the *slave-trade.* Its enormity no words can express. But here we must feel a mixture of satisfaction and regret; of satisfaction, at finding it has excited such general indignation among the people; of regret, that notwithstanding this, it should still be continued. By the most earnest and unanimous remonstrances, addressed to those who alone could abolish it, the people have purged themselves from this contamination. Their application was unsuccessful. The guilt and turpitude of this traffic now rest upon the heads of those who sanction, and of those who conduct it. From some recent events in the western colonies, it seems not unlikely the Deity is about to take this affair into his own hands, and to accomplish by his interposition what has been denied to the prayer of the nation.

* See Vol. V. Notes of Sermons, No. XXXIV.—Ed.

† Dr. Paley.

It is far from being a pleasing employ; it is painful, it is distressing, to dwell on such topics; but it is necessary. Our disease has gone too far to admit of palliatives; our wounds are too deep to be healed, till they are searched and probed to the bottom. The only safe expedient which remains to be adopted, is an immediate return to God; *to forsake every one his evil way, and the violence that is in his hands, and cry mightily to him: and who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away his fierce anger from us?* At the same time, let it be remembered, that repentance is a personal concern. Instead of losing ourselves in a crowd, and resting in general confessions, we ought each one to examine his own ways, and turn from his own iniquity. We shall not fail, if we have the least piety, to lament the prevalence of sin around us, but we can repent only *of our own:* and however, in the present mixed and imperfect state, we may share in the judgements and calamities which other men's sins draw down, it is those we commit ourselves which alone can do us ultimate injury. Our continuance here is but for a short time; after which, as many as are *purified and made white* will remove into another world, be placed under a higher economy, and be put in possession of *a kingdom that cannot be moved.*

Let me remind you that repentance is a duty of greater extent than many are apt to suppose, who, confining their view, on such occasions as these, to a few of the grosser disorders of their lives, pay little attention to the heart: they are satisfied with feeling a momentary compunction, and attempting a partial reformation, instead of crying with the royal penitent, *create in me a clean heart!* They determine to break off particular vices,—an excellent resolution as far as it goes,—without proposing to themselves a life of habitual devotion, without imploring, under a sense of weakness, that grace which can alone renew the heart, making, in the words of our Lord, the tree good, that the fruit may be good also. Let it cost us what uneasiness it may, let us resolve, at the present season, to examine our ways, to become acquainted with the state of our consciences, to

enter with "the candle of the Lord" into the inmost recesses of the heart, and the *chambers of imagery*, whatever disorder or defilement they may conceal, or whatever alarm the knowledge of ourselves may excite; since to be apprised of danger is the first step to safety, and it will be infinitely better for us to judge and accuse ourselves now, than to be judged and condemned hereafter. Happy those to whom a seasonable alarm shall suggest the means of a perpetual security. We need be under no apprehension, lest the cherishing of the sentiments we have recommended should lead to despondency. We have a High-Priest, *who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.* In the midst of the deepest humiliation, we are invited to look up to him, with a humble reliance on the efficacy of his blood which cleanses from all sin; and to intrust our prayers and our duties, disordered and imperfect at best, into his hands, that he may mingle them with the incense of his intercession, and present them with acceptance before God.

When Nineveh was threatened with destruction by the prophet Jonah, tidings were brought to the king, who proclaimed a fast. Penetrated with the profoundest awe of the divine displeasure, he enjoined a rigorous abstinence from food, which extended even to the brute creation, who were also commanded to be covered with sackcloth. For in the eyes of that penitent prince it seemed proper that every thing should wear an air of mourning and desolation, while it lay under the frown of its Maker. He himself *rose from his throne, laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.* He rightly judged that the glitter of state, the distinctions of rank, and the splendour of royalty should disappear at a moment when all classes were alike awaiting their doom; at a moment when the greatest as well as the least were made to feel they were potsherds of the earth, ready to be crumbled into dust. Such exemplary humiliation averted the divine anger, and Nineveh was spared. If our gracious Sovereign has (as we humbly believe) descended this day from his elevation, and laying aside

his robes, humbled himself in the dust before the Majesty of heaven; if his nobles have followed his example, and the people have resolved to *turn every one from his evil way*, the duties of the season will afford a surer defence than all our military preparations: our salvation will issue from the Being *whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.*

As a people, the most certain means of ensuring lasting prosperity, and of enabling us to transmit, unimpaired, to those who shall succeed us, the rich inheritance devolved from our fathers, will be a speedy return to the spirit and practice of the gospel. We shall ill consult the true interests of revelation by disguising its peculiarities, in hope of conciliating the approbation of infidels, and of adapting it more to their taste—a mistaken and dangerous policy, by which we run imminent risk of catching *their* contagion, without imparting the benefit of *its* truths. Let us not for a moment blench from its mysteries: they are *mysteries of godliness;* and, however much they may surpass human reason, bear the distinct impress of a divine hand. We rejoice that they *are mysteries*, so far from being ashamed of them on that account; since the principal reason why they are, and must ever continue such, is derived from their elevation, from their *unsearchable riches*, and undefinable grandeur. In fine, let us draw our religion and morality entirely from the word of God, without seeking any deeper foundation for our duties than the *will* of the Supreme Being, an implicit and perfect acquiescence in which is the *highest virtue* a creature can attain.

Amidst many unfavourable symptoms of the state of morals amongst us, there are others of a contrary nature. We may hope, infidelity has nearly run its length. In truth, its sophistry, in the eyes of men of sense, has been much discredited by the absurdity of its tenets; and if any have been in danger of being seduced by the talents of its advocates, they have commonly found a sufficient antidote in their lives. We have learned to prize revelation more than ever, since we have seen the ludicrous mistakes, as well as serious disasters, of those mystics of

impiety who chose rather to walk by an internal light than enjoy the benefit of its illumination. They have edified us much, without intending it: they have had the effect which the great critic of antiquity assigns as the purpose of the Tragic Muse, that of purifying the heart by pity and terror. Their zeal has excited an equal degree of ardour in a better cause, and their efforts to extirpate religion have been opposed by contrary efforts, to diffuse its influence, at home and abroad, to a degree unexampled in modern times. A growing unanimity has prevailed among the good in different parties, who, finding a centre of union in the great truths of revelation, and in a solicitude for its interests, are willing to merge their smaller differences in a common cause. The number of the sincerely pious, we trust, is increasing among us, whose zeal, so far from suffering abatement from the confidence of infidelity, has glowed with a purer and more steady flame than ever. These are pleasing indications that the presence of the *Holy One of Israel* is still in the midst of us.

How it may please the Ruler of the universe to dispose the destinies of the two most powerful nations of the earth, which are, at this moment, laid in the balance together, it is impossible for us with certainty to predict. But when we consider how many of his sincere worshippers, how large a portion of his church, together with how rich a fund of wisdom, of talents, and of all those elements of social order and happiness which he must approve, are enclosed within the limits of this highly-favoured land, we cannot believe he intends to give it up a prey to his enemies. Our insular situation is favourable, our resources prodigious, and the preparations which have long been making, apparently every way equal to the danger of the crisis: but still we would place our ultimate reliance on Him who abases the proud, and exalts the lowly. It would be presumption to imagine it in my power to add any thing to those considerations which have already produced such a general movement in defence of our liberties. The cause speaks for itself: it excites feelings which words are ill able to

express; involving every object and motive which can engage the solicitude, affect the interests, or inflame the heart, of man. After a series of provocations and injuries, reciprocally sustained and retaliated, the dispute betwixt us and our enemies is brought to a short issue; it is no longer which of the two nations shall have the ascendant, but which shall continue a nation: it is a struggle for existence, not for empire. It must surely be regarded as a happy circumstance that the contest did not take this shape at an earlier period, while many were deceived by certain specious pretences of liberty into a favourable opinion of our enemies' designs. The popular delusion is passed; the most unexampled prodigies of guilt have dispelled it; and, after a series of rapine and cruelty, have torn from every heart the last fibres of mistaken partiality. The crimes of those with whom we have to contend are legible in every part of Europe. There is scarcely a man to be found who is not most perfectly acquainted with the meaning of that freedom they profess to bestow; that it is a freedom from the dominion of laws to pass under the yoke of slavery, and from the fear of God to plunge into crimes and impiety; an impious barter of all that is good for all that is ill, through the utmost range and limits of moral destiny. Nor is it less easy to develope the character of our principal enemy. A man bred in the school of ferocity, amidst the din of arms, and the tumult of camps; his element war and confusion; who has changed his religion with his uniform, and has not spared the assassination of his own troops; it is easy to foresee what treatment such a man will give to his enemies should they fall into his power; to those enemies, especially, who, saved from the shipwreck of nations, are preserving as in an ark the precious remains of civilization and order; and whom, after destroying the liberties of every other country, he envies the melancholy distinction of being the only people he has not enslaved. Engaged with such an enemy, no weak hopes of moderation or clemency can tempt us for a moment to relax in our resistance to his power; and the only alternative which remains is, to conquer or to die.

Hence that unexampled unanimity which distinguishes the present season. In other wars we have been a divided people: the effect of our external operations has been in some measure weakened by intestine dissension. When peace has returned, the breach has widened, while parties have been formed on the merits of particular men, or of particular measures. These have all disappeared; we have buried our mutual animosities in a regard to the common safety. The sentiment of self-preservation, the first law which nature has impressed, has absorbed every other feeling; and the fire of liberty has melted down the discordant sentiments and minds of the British Empire into one mass, and propelled them in one direction. Partial interests and feelings are suspended, the spirits of the body are collected at the heart, and we are awaiting with anxiety, but without dismay, the discharge of that mighty tempest which hangs upon the skirts of the horizon, and to which the eyes of Europe and of the world are turned in silent and awful expectation. While we feel solicitude, let us not betray dejection, nor be alarmed at the past successes of our enemy, which are more dangerous to himself than to us, since they have raised him from obscurity to an elevation which has made him giddy, and tempted him to suppose every thing within his power. The intoxication of his success is the omen of his fall. What, though he has carried the flames of war throughout Europe, and *gathered as a nest the riches of the nations, while none peeped, nor muttered, nor moved the wing;* he has yet to try his fortune in another field; he has yet to contend on a soil filled with the monuments of freedom, enriched with the blood of its defenders; with a people who, animated with one soul, and inflamed with zeal for their laws and for their prince, are armed in defence of all that is dear or venerable; their wives, their parents, their children, the sanctuary of God, and the sepulchre of their fathers. We will not suppose there is one who will be deterred from exerting himself in such a cause, by a pusillanimous regard to his safety, when he reflects that he has already lived too long who has survived the ruin of his country;

and that he who can enjoy life after such an event, deserves not to have lived at all. It will suffice us, if our mortal existence, which is at most but a span, be co-extended with that of the nation which gave us birth. We will gladly quit the scene, with all that is noble and august, innocent and holy; and instead of wishing to survive the oppression of weakness, the violation of beauty, and the extinction of every thing on which the heart can repose, welcome the shades which will hide from our view such horrors.

From the most fixed principles of human nature, as well as from the examples of all history, we may be certain the conquest of this country, should it be permitted to take place, will not terminate in any ordinary catastrophe, in any much less calamitous than utter extermination. Our present elevation will be the exact measure of our future depression, as it will measure the fears and jealousies of those who subdue us. While the smallest vestige remains of our former greatness, while any trace or memorial exists of our having been once a flourishing and independent empire, while the nation breathes, they will be afraid of its recovering its strength, and never think themselves secure of their conquest till our navy is consumed, our wealth dissipated, our commerce extinguished, every liberal institution abolished, our nobles extirpated; whatever in rank, character, and talents gives distinction in society, called out and destroyed, and the refuse which remains swept together into a putrifying heap by the besom of destruction. The enemy will not need to proclaim his triumph; it will be felt in the more expressive silence of extended desolation.

Recollect for a moment his invasion of Egypt, a country which had never given him the slightest provocation; a country so remote from the scene of his crimes, that it probably did not know there was such a man in existence (happy ignorance, could it have lasted!); but while he was looking around him, like a vulture perched on an eminence, for objects on which he might gratify his insatiable thirst of rapine, he no sooner beheld the defenceless condition of that unhappy country, than he

alighted upon it in a moment. In vain did it struggle, flap its wings, and rend the air with its shrieks: the cruel enemy, deaf to its cries, had infixed his talons, and was busy in sucking its blood, when the interference of a superior power forced him to relinquish his prey, and betake himself to flight. Will that vulture, think you, ever forget his disappointment on that occasion, or the numerous wounds, blows, and concussions he received in a ten years' struggle? It is impossible. It were folly to expect it. He meditates, no doubt, the deepest revenge. He who saw nothing in the simple manners and blood-bought liberties of the Swiss to engage his forbearance, nothing in proclaiming himself a Mahometan to revolt his conscience, nothing in the condition of defenceless prisoners to excite his pity, nor in that of the companions of his warfare, sick and wounded in a foreign land, to prevent him from despatching them by poison, will treat in a manner worthy of the impiety and inhumanity of his character, a nation which he naturally dislikes as being free, dreads as the rivals of his power, and abhors as the authors of his digrace.

Though these are undoubted truths, and ought to be seriously considered, yet I would rather choose to appeal to sentiments more elevated than such topics can inspire. To form an adequate idea of the duties of this crisis, it will be necessary to raise your minds to a level with your station, to extend your views to a distant futurity, and to consequences the most certain, though most remote. By a series of criminal enterprises, by the successes of guilty ambition, the liberties of Europe have been gradually extinguished: the subjugation of Holland, Switzerland, and the free towns of Germany has completed that catastrophe; and we are the only people in the eastern hemisphere who are in possession of equal laws and a free constitution. Freedom, driven from every spot on the continent, has sought an asylum in a country which she always chose for her favourite abode; but she is pursued even here, and threatened with destruction. The inundation of lawless power, after covering the whole earth, threatens to follow us

here; and we are most exactly, most critically placed, in the only aperture where it can be successfully repelled, in the Thermopylæ of the universe. As far as the interests of freedom are concerned, the most important by far of sublunary interests, you, my countrymen, stand in the capacity of the fœderal representatives of the human race; for with you it is to determine (under God) in what condition the latest posterity shall be born; their fortunes are intrusted to your care, and on your conduct at this moment depends the colour and complexion of their destiny. If liberty, after being extinguished on the continent, is suffered to expire here, whence is it ever to emerge in the midst of that thick night that will invest it? It remains with you then to decide whether that freedom, at whose voice the kingdoms of Europe awoke from the sleep of ages, to run a career of virtuous emulation in every thing great and good; the freedom which dispelled the mists of superstition, and invited the nations to behold their God; whose magic touch kindled the rays of genius, the enthusiasm of poetry, and the flame of eloquence; the freedom which poured into our lap opulence and arts, and embellished life with innumerable institutions and improvements, till it became a theatre of wonders; it is for you to decide whether this freedom shall yet survive, or be covered with a funeral pall, and wrapt in eternal gloom. It is not necessary to await your determination. In the solicitude you feel to approve yourselves worthy of such a trust, every thought of what is afflicting in warfare, every apprehension of danger must vanish, and you are impatient to mingle in the battles of the civilized world. Go then, ye defenders of your country,* accompanied with every auspicious omen; advance with alacrity into the field, where God himself musters the hosts to war. Religion is too much interested in your success not to lend you her aid; she will shed over this enterprise her selectest influence. While you are engaged in the field

* A company of volunteers attended public worship on this occasion.—Ed.

many will repair to the closet, many to the sanctuary; the faithful of every name will employ that prayer which has power with God; the feeble hands which are unequal to any other weapon will grasp the sword of the Spirit; and from myriads of humble, contrite hearts, the voice of intercession, supplication, and weeping, will mingle in its ascent to heaven with the shouts of battle and the shock of arms.

While you have every thing to fear from the success of the enemy, you have every means of preventing that success, so that it is next to impossible for victory not to crown your exertions. The extent of your resources, under God, is equal to the justice of your cause. But should Providence determine otherwise, should you fall in this struggle, should the nation fall, you will have the satisfaction (the purest allotted to man) of having performed your part; your names will be enrolled with the most illustrious dead, while posterity, to the end of time, as often as they revolve the events of this period (and they will incessantly revolve them), will turn to you a reverential eye, while they mourn over the freedom which is entombed in your sepulchre. I cannot but imagine the virtuous heroes, legislators, and patriots, of every age and country, are bending from their elevated seats to witness this contest, as if they were incapable, till it be brought to a favourable issue, of enjoying their eternal repose. Enjoy that repose, illustrious immortals! Your mantle fell when you ascended; and thousands inflamed with your spirit, and impatient to tread in your steps, are ready *to swear by Him that sitteth upon the throne, and liveth for ever and ever*, they will protect freedom in her last asylum, and never desert that cause which you sustained by your labours, and cemented with your blood. And thou, sole Ruler among the children of men, to whom the shields of the earth belong, *gird on thy sword, thou Most Mighty:* go forth with our hosts in the day of battle! Impart, in addition to their hereditary valour, that confidence of success which springs from thy presence! Pour into their hearts the spirit of departed heroes! Inspire them with thine own; and,

while led by thine hand, and fighting under thy banners, open thou their eyes to behold in every valley, and in every plain, what the prophet beheld by the same illumination—chariots of fire, and horses of fire! *Then shall the strong man be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark: and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.*

THE ADVANTAGES OF KNOWLEDGE TO THE LOWER CLASSES:

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

HERVEY LANE, LEICESTER,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

[Published in 1810.]

ADVERTISEMENT·

To attempt to disarm the severity of criticism by humiliation or entreaty, would be a hopeless task. Waving every apology, the author, therefore, has only to remark, that the motives of a writer must ever remain a secret, but the *tendency* of what he writes is capable of being ascertained, and is in reality the only consideration in which the public are interested. The author is concerned at an unexpected coincidence in the text betwixt this and a very excellent discourse, delivered on a similar occasion, and published by his much esteemed friend, the Rev. Francis Cox. The coincidence was entirely accidental, and the text in each instance being employed very much in the manner of a motto, it is hoped the train of thought will be found sufficiently distinct. He cannot conclude without recommending to the public, and to the young especially, the serious perusal of the above-mentioned animated and impressive discourse.

A SERMON.

PROVERBS xix. 2.

That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good.

THROUGHOUT every part of this book the author is copious, and even profuse, in the praises of knowledge. To stimulate to the acquisition of it, and to assist in the pursuit, is the professed design with which it was penned. *To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young men knowledge and discretion.*

Though it is evident from many passages, that in the encomiums to which we have referred, the author had principally in view divine knowledge, yet from other parts it is equally certain he by no means intended to exclude from these commendations knowledge in general; and as we propose this afternoon to recommend to your attention the Sabbath-day School established in this place, a few reflections on the utility of knowledge at large, and of religious knowledge in particular, will not be deemed unseasonable.

I. Let me request your attention to a few remarks on the utility of knowledge in general. It must strike us, in the first place, that the extent to which we have the faculty of acquiring it, forms the most obvious distinction of our species. In inferior animals it subsists in so small a degree, that we are wont to deny it to them altogether; the range of their knowledge, if it deserve the name, is so extremely limited, and their ideas so few

and simple. Whatever is most exquisite in their operations is referred to an instinct, which, working within a narrow compass, though with undeviating uniformity, supplies the place, and supersedes the necessity, of reason. In inferior animals, the knowledge of the whole species is possessed by each individual of the species, while man is distinguished by numberless diversities in the scale of mental improvement. Now, to be destitute, in a remarkable degree, of an acquisition which forms the appropriate possession of human nature, is degrading to that nature, and must proportionably disqualify it for reaching the end of its creation.

As the power of acquiring knowledge is to be ascribed to reason, so the attainment of it mightily strengthens and improves it, and thereby enables it to enrich itself with further acquisitions. Knowledge, in general, expands the mind, exalts the faculties, refines the taste of pleasure, and opens numerous sources of intellectual enjoyment. By means of it we become less dependent for satisfaction upon the sensitive appetites, the gross pleasures of sense are more easily despised, and we are made to feel the superiority of the spiritual to the material part of our nature. Instead of being continually solicited by the influence and irritation of sensible objects, the mind can retire within herself, and expatiate in the cool and quiet walks of contemplation. The Author of nature has wisely annexed a pleasure to the exercise of our active powers, and particularly to the pursuit of truth, which, if it be in some instances less intense, is far more durable than the gratifications of sense, and is, on that account, incomparably more valuable. Its duration, to say nothing of its other properties, renders it more valuable. It may be repeated without satiety, and pleases afresh on every reflection upon it. These are self-created satisfactions, always within our reach, not dependent upon events, not requiring a peculiar combination of circumstances to produce or maintain them; they rise from the mind itself, and inhere, so to speak, in its very substance, Let the mind but retain its proper functions, and they spring

up spontaneously, unsolicited, unborrowed, and unbought. Even the difficulties and impediments which obstruct the pursuit of truth, serve, according to the economy under which we are placed, to render it more interesting. The labour of intellectual search resembles and exceeds the tumultuous pleasures of the chase; and the consciousness of overcoming a formidable obstacle, or of lighting on some happy discovery, gives all the enjoyment of a conquest, without those corroding reflections by which the latter must be impaired. Can we doubt that Archimedes, who was so absorbed in his contemplations as not to be diverted by the sacking of his native city, and was killed in the very act of meditating a mathematical problem, did not, when he exclaimed *Ευρηκα! ευρηκα!* I have found it! I have found it! feel a transport as genuine as was ever experienced after the most brilliant victory?

But to return to the moral good which results from the acquisition of knowledge: it is chiefly this, that by multiplying the mental resources, it has a tendency to exalt the character, and, in some measure, to correct and subdue the taste for gross sensuality. It enables the possessor to beguile his leisure moments (and every man has such) in an innocent, at least, if not in a useful, manner. The poor man who can read, and who possesses a taste for reading, can find entertainment at home, without being tempted to repair to the public house for that purpose. His mind can find him employment when his body is at rest; he does not lie prostrate and afloat on the current of incidents, liable to be carried whithersoever the impulse of appetite may direct. There is in the mind of such a man an intellectual spring urging him to the pursuit of *mental* good; and if the minds of his family also are a little cultivated, conversation becomes the more interesting, and the sphere of domestic enjoyment enlarged. The calm satisfaction which books afford, puts him into a disposition to relish more exquisitely the tranquil delight inseparable from the indulgence of conjugal and parental affection; and as he will be more respectable in the eyes of his family

than he who can teach them nothing, he will be naturally induced to cultivate whatever may preserve, and to shun whatever would impair, that respect. He who is inured to reflection will carry his views beyond the present hour; he will extend his prospect a little into futurity, and be disposed to make some provision for his approaching wants; whence will result an increased motive to industry, together with a care to husband his earnings, and to avoid unnecessary expense. The poor man who has gained a taste for good books will in all likelihood become thoughtful; and when you have given the poor a habit of thinking, you have conferred on them a much greater favour than by the gift of a large sum of money, since you have put them in possession of the *principle* of all legitimate prosperity. . . .

I am persuaded that the extreme profligacy, improvidence, and misery, which are so prevalent among the labouring classes in many countries, are chiefly to be ascribed to the want of education. In proof of this we need only cast our eyes on the condition of the Irish, compared with that of the peasantry in Scotland. Among the former you behold nothing but beggary, wretchedness, and sloth: in Scotland, on the contrary, under the disadvantages of a worse climate and more unproductive soil, a degree of decency and comfort, the fruit of sobriety and industry, are conspicuous among the lower classes. And to what is this disparity in their situation to be ascribed, except to the influence of education? In Ireland, the education of the poor is miserably neglected; very few of them can read, and they grow up in a total ignorance of what it most befits a rational creature to understand: while in Scotland the establishment of free schools * in every parish, an essential branch of the

* In the "Edinburgh Christian Instructor" for 1816, the slight mistake which occurs above, in reference to "free schools" in North Britain, is thus corrected. "The truth is, that *free* schools could never have effected that improvement in the manners and intelligence of the lower orders in Scotland, for which they are so remarkable; and we have reason to bless the judicious liberality of our ancestors, who contented themselves with bringing education within the reach of the lower orders, by allowing limited salaries to the schoolmasters, *in aid of the school wages*, instead of going to the hurtful extreme which tends to render teachers careless and parents indifferent."—ED.

ecclesiastical constitution of the country, brings the means of instruction within the reach of the poorest, who are there inured to decency, industry, and order.

Some have objected to the instruction of the lower classes, from an apprehension that it would lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and, by impairing the habits of subordination, endanger the tranquillity of the state; an objection devoid surely of all force and validity. It is not easy to conceive in what manner instructing men in their duties can prompt them to neglect those duties, or how that enlargement of reason which enables them to comprehend the true grounds of authority and the obligation to obedience, should indispose them to obey. The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of ranks which is essential to its subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture, which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. The objection we have stated, implies a reflection on the social order, equally impolitic, invidious, and unjust. Nothing in reality renders legitimate governments so insecure as extreme ignorance in the people. It is this which yields them an easy prey to seduction, makes them the victims of prejudices and false alarms, and so ferocious withal, that their interference in a time of public commotion, is more to be dreaded than the eruption of a volcano.

The true prop of good government is the opinion, the perception, on the part of the subject of benefits resulting from it; a settled conviction, in other words, of its being a public good. Now nothing can produce or maintain that opinion but knowledge, since opinion is a form of knowledge. Of tyrannical and unlawful governments, indeed, the support is fear, to which ignorance is as congenial as it is abhorrent from the genius of a free people. Look at the popular insurrections and massacres in France: of what description of persons were those ruffians composed, who, breaking forth like a torrent, overwhelmed the mounds of lawful authority? Who were the cannibals that sported with the mangled carcases and palpitating limbs of their murdered victims, and dragged them about with their teeth in the gardens of

the Tuilleries? Were they refined and elaborated into these barbarities by the efforts of a too polished education? No: they were the very scum of the people, destitute of all moral culture, whose atrocity was only equalled by their ignorance, as might well be expected, when the one was the legitimate parent of the other. Who are the persons who, in every country, are most disposed to outrage and violence, but the most ignorant and uneducated of the poor? to which class also chiefly belong those unhappy beings who are doomed to expiate their crimes at the fatal tree; few of whom, it has recently been ascertained, on accurate inquiry, are able to read, and the greater part utterly destitute of all moral or religious principle.

Ignorance gives a sort of eternity to prejudice, and perpetuity to error. When a baleful superstition, like that of the church of Rome, has once got footing among a people in this situation, it becomes next to impossible to eradicate it; for it can only be assailed, with success, by the weapons of reason and argument, and to these weapons it is impassive. The sword of ethereal temper loses its edge, when tried on the scaly hide of this leviathan. No wonder the church of Rome is such a friend to ignorance; it is but paying the arrears of gratitude in which she is deeply indebted. How is it possible for her not to hate that light which would unveil her impostures, and detect her enormities?

If we survey the genius of Christianity, we shall find it to be just the reverse. It was ushered into the world with the injunction, *Go and teach all nations*, and every step of its progress is to be ascribed to instruction. With a condescension worthy of its Author, it offers information to the meanest and most illiterate; but extreme ignorance is not a state of mind favourable to it. The first churches were planted in cities (and those the most celebrated and enlightened), drawn neither from the very highest nor the very lowest classes; the former, too often the victims of luxury and pride, the latter, sunk in extreme stupidity; but from the middle orders, where the largest portion of virtue and good sense has usually re-

sided. In remote villages, its progress was extremely slow, owing, unquestionably, to that want of mental cultivation, which rendered them the last retreats of superstition; insomuch that in the fifth century, the abettors of the ancient idolatry began to be denominated *Pagani*, which properly denotes the inhabitants of the country in distinction from those who reside in towns. At the Reformation, the progress of the reformed faith went hand in hand with the advancement of letters; it had every where the same friends and the same enemies, and, next to its agreement with the Holy Scriptures, its success is chiefly to be ascribed, under God, to the art of printing, the revival of classical learning, and the illustrious patrons of science attached to its cause. In the representation of that glorious period, usually styled the Millennium, when religion shall universally prevail, it is mentioned as a conspicuous feature, that *men shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* That period will not be distinguished from the preceding, by men's minds being more torpid and inactive, but rather by the consecration of every power to the service of the Most High. It will be a period of remarkable illumination, during which *the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as that of seven days.* Every useful talent will be cultivated, every art subservient to the interests of man, be improved and perfected; learning will amass her stores, and genius emit her splendour; but the former will be displayed without ostentation, and the latter shine with the softened effulgence of humility and love.

II. We have hitherto spoken of the advantages of *knowledge in general;* we proceed to notice the utility of *religious knowledge* in particular. Religion, on account of its intimate relation to a future state, is every man's proper business, and should be his chief care. Of knowledge in general, there are branches which it would be preposterous in the bulk of mankind to attempt to acquire, because they have no immediate connexion with their duties, and demand talents which nature has denied, or

opportunities which Providence has withheld. But with respect to the primary truths of religion, the case is different; they are of such daily use and necessity, that they form not the materials of mental luxury, so properly, as the food of the mind. In improving the character, the influence of general knowledge is often feeble and always indirect; of religious knowledge the tendency to purify the heart is immediate, and forms its professed scope and design. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* To ascertain the character of the Supreme Author of all things, to know, as far as we are capable of comprehending such a subject, what is his moral disposition, what the situation we stand in towards him, and the principles by which he conducts his administration, will be allowed, by every considerate person, to be of the highest consequence. Compared to this, all other speculations and inquiries sink into insignificance; because every event that can befall us, is in his hands, and by his sentence our final condition must be fixed. To regard such an inquiry with indifference, is the mark, not of a noble, but of an abject mind, which, immersed in sensuality, or amused with trifles, *deems itself unworthy of eternal life.* To be so absorbed in worldly pursuits, as to neglect future prospects, is a conduct that can plead no excuse, until it is ascertained beyond all doubt or contradiction, that there is no hereafter, and that nothing remains but that we *eat and drink for to-morrow we die.* Even in that case, to forego the hope of immortality without a sigh; to be gay and sportive on the brink of destruction, in the very moment of relinquishing prospects, on which the wisest and best in every age have delighted to dwell, is the indication of a base and degenerate spirit. If existence be a good, the eternal loss of it must be a great evil: if it be an evil, reason suggests the propriety of inquiring why it is so, of investigating the maladies by which it is oppressed. Amidst the darkness and uncertainty which hang over our future condition, Revelation, by bringing life and immortality to light, affords the only relief. In the Bible alone, we learn the real character of

the Supreme Being; his holiness, justice, mercy, and truth; the moral condition of man, considered in his relation to Him, is clearly pointed out; the doom of impenitent transgressors denounced; and the method of obtaining mercy, through the interposition of a divine mediator, plainly revealed. There are two considerations which may suffice to evince the indispensable necessity of scriptural knowledge.

1. The scriptures contain an authentic discovery *of the way of salvation.* They are a revelation of mercy to a lost world; a reply to that most interesting inquiry, *What we must do to be saved.* The distinguishing feature of the gospel system, is the economy of redemption, or the gracious provision the Supreme Being has thought fit to make for reconciling the world to himself, by the manifestation in human nature of his own Son. It is this which constitutes it the *Gospel*, by way of eminence, or the glad tidings concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, on the right reception of which, or its rejection, turns our everlasting weal or woe. It is not from the character of God, as our creator, it should be remembered, that the hope of the guilty can arise; the fullest developement of his essential perfections could afford no relief in this case, and therefore natural religion, were it capable of being carried to the utmost perfection, can never supersede the necessity of revealed. To inspire confidence, an express communication from heaven is necessary: since the introduction of sin has produced a peculiarity in our situation, and a perplexity in our prospects, which nothing but an express assurance of mercy can remove.

In what manner the blessed and only Potentate may think fit to dispose of a race of apostates, is a question on which reason can suggest nothing satisfactory, nothing salutary: a question, in the solution of which, their being no data to proceed upon, wisdom and folly fail alike, and every order of intellect is reduced to a level; for *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him?* It is a secret which, had he not been pleased to unfold it, must have for ever remained in the breast of the Deity. This secret, in infinite mercy, he

has condescended to disclose: the silence, not that which John witnessed in the Apocalypse, of half an hour, but that of ages, is broken; the darkness is past, and we behold, in the gospel, the astonishing spectacle of *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to them their trespasses*, and sending forth his ambassadors to *entreat us in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* To that strange insensibility with respect to the concerns of a future world, which is at once the indication and consequence of the fall, must we ascribe the languid attention with which this communication is received; instead of producing, as it ought, transports of gratitude and joy in every breast.

This, however we may be disposed to regard it, is unquestionably the grand peculiarity of the gospel, the exclusive boast and treasure of the Scriptures, and most emphatically *the way of salvation*, not only as it reveals the gracious intentions of God to a sinful world, but as it lays a solid foundation for the *supernatural* duties of faith and repentance. All the discoveries of the gospel bear a most intimate relation to the character and offices of the Saviour; from him they emanate, in him they centre; nor is any thing we learn from the Old and New Testament of saving tendency, further than as a part of the truth as it is *in Jesus.* The neglect of considering revelation in this light, is a fruitful source of infidelity. Viewing it in no higher character than a republication of the law of nature, men are first led to doubt the importance, and next the truth, of the discoveries it contains; an easy and natural transition, since the question of their importance is so complicated with that of their truth, in the Scriptures themselves, that the most refined ingenuity cannot long keep them separate. *It gives the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* While we contemplate it under this its true character, we view it in its just dimensions, and feel no inclination to extenuate the force of those representations

which are expressive of its pre-eminent dignity. There is nothing will be allowed to come into comparison with it, nothing we shall not be ready to sacrifice for a participation of its blessings, and the extension of its influenee. The veneration we shall feel for the Bible, as the depository of *saving knowledge*, will be totally distinct, not only from what we attach to any other book, but from that admiration its other properties inspire; and the variety and antiquity of its history, the light it affords in various researches, its inimitable touches of nature, together with the sublimity and beauty so copiously poured over its pages, will be deemed subsidiary ornaments, the embellishments of the casket, which contains the *pearl of great price.*

2. Scriptural knowledge is of inestimable value on account of its supplying an infallible *rule of life.* To the most untutored mind, the information it affords on this subject is far more full and precise than the highest efforts of reason could attain. In the best moral precepts issuing from human wisdom, there is an incurable defect in that want of authority which robs them of their power over the conscience; they are obligatory no farther than their reason is perceived; a deduction of proofs is necessary, more or less intricate and uncertain, and even when clearest, it is still but the language of man to man, respectable as sage advice, but wanting the force and authority of law. In a well-attested revelation, it is the Judge speaking from the tribunal, the Supreme Legislator promulgating and interpreting his own laws. With what force and conviction do those Apostles and Prophets address us, whose miraculous powers attest them to be the servants of the Most High, the immediate organs of the Deity! As the morality of the gospel is more pure and comprehensive than was ever inculcated before, so the consideration of its divine origination invests it with an energy of which every system not expressly founded upon it is entirely devoid. We turn at our peril from Him who speaketh to us from heaven.

Of an accountable creature, duty is the concern of every moment, since he is every moment pleasing or dis-

pleasing God. It is a universal element, mingling with every action, and qualifying every disposition and pursuit. The moral quality of conduct, as it serves both to ascertain and to form the character, has consequences in a future world so certain and infallible, that it is represented in scripture as a seed, no part of which is lost, "for *whatsoever* a man soweth, that also shall he reap." That rectitude which the inspired writers usually denominate *holiness*, is the health and beauty of the soul, capable of bestowing dignity in the absence of every other accomplishment, while the want of it leaves the possessor of the richest intellectual endowments, a painted sepulchre. Hence results the indispensable necessity, to every description of persons, of sound religious instruction, and of an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, as its genuine source.

It must be confessed, from melancholy experience, that a speculative acquaintance with the rules of duty, is too compatible with the violation of its dictates, and that it is possible for the convictions of conscience to be habitually overpowered by the corrupt suggestions of appetite. To see distinctly the right way, and to pursue it, are not precisely the same thing. Still nothing in the order of means promises so much success as the diligent inculcation of revealed truth. He who is acquainted with the *terrors of the Lord*, cannot live in the neglect of God and religion with present, any more than with future, impunity; the path of disobedience is obstructed, if not rendered impassable; and wherever he turns his eyes he beholds the sword of divine justice stretched out to intercept his passage. Guilt will be appalled, conscience alarmed, and the fruits of unlawful gratification embittered to his taste.

It is surely desirable to place as many obstacles as possible in the path of ruin: to take care that the image of death shall meet the offender at every turn; that he shall not be able to persist without treading upon briars and scorpions, without forcing his way through obstructions more formidable than he can expect to meet with in a contrary course. If you can enlist the nobler part

of his nature under the banners of virtue, set him at war with himself, and subject him to the necessity, should he persevere, of stifling and overcoming whatever is most characteristic of a reasonable creature, you have done what will probably not be unproductive of advantage. If he be at the same time reminded, by his acquaintance with the word of God, of a better state of mind being attainable, a better destiny reserved (provided they are willing and obedient) for the children of men, there is room to hope that, *wearied*, to speak in the language of the prophet, *in the greatness of his way*, he will bethink himself of the true refuge, and implore the Spirit of grace to aid his weakness, and subdue his corruptions. Sound religious instruction is a perpetual counterpoise to the force of depravity. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.*

While we insist on the absolute necessity of an acquaintance with the word of God, we are equally convinced it is but an instrument, which, like every other, requires a hand to wield it; and that, important as it is in the order of means, the Spirit of Christ only can make it effectual, which ought therefore to be earnestly and incessantly implored for that purpose. *Open mine eyes*, saith the Psalmist, *and I shall behold wonderful things out of thy law.* We trust it will be your care, who have the conduct of the school we are recommending to the patronage of this audience, to impress on these children a deep conviction of their radical corruption, and of the necessity of the agency of the Spirit, to render the knowledge they acquire practical and experimental. *In the morning sow your seed, in the evening withhold not your hand; but remember that neither he that soweth, nor he that watereth, is any thing; it is God that giveth the increase.* Be not satisfied with making them read a lesson, or repeat a prayer. By every thing tender and solemn

in religion, by a due admixture of the awful considerations drawn from the prospects of death and judgement, with others of a more pleasing nature, aim to fix serious impressions on their hearts. Aim to produce a religious concern, carefully watch its progress, and endeavour to conduct it to a prosperous issue. Lead them to the footstool of the Saviour; teach them to rely, as guilty creatures, on his merits alone, and to commit their eternal interests entirely into his hands. Let the salvation of these children be the object, to which every word of your instructions, every exertion of your authority, is directed. Despise the profane clamour which would deter you from attempting to render them serious, from an apprehension of its making them melancholy, not doubting for a moment, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that the path to true happiness lies through purity, humility, and devotion. Meditate the worth of souls: meditate deeply the lessons the Scriptures afford on their inconceivable value and eternal duration. While the philosopher wearies himself with endless speculations on their physical properties and nature, while the politician only contemplates the social arrangements of mankind and the shifting forms of policy, fix *your* attention on the individual importance of man, as the creature of God, and a candidate for immortality. Let it be your highest ambition to train up these children for an unchanging condition of being. Spare no pains to recover them to the image of God; render familiar to their minds, in all its extent, the various branches of that *holiness* without which *none shall see the Lord.* Inculcate the obligation, and endeavour to inspire the love of that rectitude, that eternal rectitude, which was with God before time began, was embodied in the person of his Son, and in its lower communications, will survive every sublunary change, emerge in the dissolution of all things, and be impressed, in refulgent characters, on the new heavens and the new earth, *in which dwelleth righteousness.* Pray often with them, and for them, and remind them of the inconceivable advantages attached to that exercise. Ac-

custom them to a punctual and reverential attendance at the house of God: insist on the sanctification of the Sabbath, by such a disposal of time, as is suitable to a day of rest and devotion. Survey them with a vigilant and tender eye, checking every appearance of an evil and depraved disposition the moment it springs up, and encouraging the dawn of piety and virtue. By thus *training them up in the way they should go*, you may reasonably hope that *when old, they will not depart from it.*

We congratulate the nation, on the extent of the efforts employed, and the means set on foot, for the improvement of the lower classes, and especially the children of the poor, in moral and religious knowledge, from which we hope much good will accrue, not only to the parties concerned, but to the kingdom at large. These are the likeliest, or rather, the only expedients that can be adopted, for forming a sound and virtuous populace; and if there be any truth in the figure, by which society is compared to a pyramid, it is on them its stability chiefly depends: the elaborate ornament at the top will be a wretched compensation for the want of solidity in the lower parts of the structure. These are not the times in which it is safe for a nation to repose on the lap of ignorance. If there ever were a season, when public tranquillity was ensured by the absence of knowledge, that season is past. The convulsed state of the world will not permit unthinking stupidity to sleep, without being appalled by phantoms, and shaken by terrors, to which reason, which defines her objects, and limits her apprehension, by the reality of things, is a stranger. Every thing in the condition of mankind announces the approach of some great crisis, for which nothing can prepare us but the diffusion of knowledge, probity, and the fear of the Lord. While the world is impelled, with such violence, in opposite directions; while a spirit of giddiness and revolt is shed upon the nations, and the seeds of mutation are so thickly sown, the improvement of the mass of the people will be our grand security; in the neglect of which, the politeness,

the refinement, and the knowledge accumulated in the higher orders, weak and unprotected, will be exposed to imminent danger, and perish like a garland in the grasp of popular fury. *Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure.*

ON THE DISCOURAGEMENTS AND SUPPORTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER:

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED TO

THE REV. JAMES ROBERTSON,

AT HIS ORDINATION OVER THE INDEPENDENT CHURCH, AT STRETTON, WARWICKSHIRE.

[PUBLISHED IN 1812.]

PREFACE.

The following Discourse would sooner have made its appearance, but for circumstances in which the public are too little interested, to render it necessary or proper for me to explain: nor should I have adverted to the time of its publication, did it not seem strange that, having been preached on a public occasion, it should be committed to the press more than a twelvemonth after the delivery.

With respect to the Sermon itself, the author begs leave to bespeak the indulgence of his readers for introducing sentiments with which they must be perfectly familiar, requesting them to recollect that, on practical subjects, the most common thoughts are usually the most important, and that originality is the last quality we seek for in advice. If it have any tendency to do good beyond the occasion of its delivery, by reminding my highly-esteemed brethren in the ministry of the duties and obligation attached to their sacred function, the end proposed will be answered. The worthy person to whom it was addressed, gave a specimen of his liberality, in engaging me to take so leading a part in his ordination, when our difference of sentiment on the subject of Baptism was well known; a subject which has, unhappily, been a frequent occasion of alienating the minds of christians from each other. How much is it to be lamented, that the christian world should be so violently agitated by disputes, and divided into factions, on points, which, it is allowed, in whatever way they are decided, do not enter into the essentials of christianity! When will the time arrive, when the disciples of Christ shall cordially join hand and heart with all who *hold the head*,

and no other terms of communion be insisted upon in any church, but what are necessary to constitute a real christian? The departure from a principle so directly resulting from the genius of christianity, and so evidently inculcated and implied in the sacred Scriptures, has, in my apprehension, been productive of infinite mischief; nor is there room to anticipate the period of the universal diffusion and triumph of the christian religion, but in consequence of its being completely renounced and abandoned.

What can be more repugnant to the beautiful idea which our Saviour gives us of his church, as *one fold under one shepherd*, than the present aspect of Christendom, split into separate and hostile communions, frowning defiance on each other, where each erects itself upon *party principles*, and selects its respective watch-word of contention, as though the epithet of militant, when applied to the church, were designed to announce, not a state of conflict with the powers of darkness, but of irreconcilable intestine warfare and opposition. But it is necessary to quit a subject which, though painfully interesting, would necessarily lead to reflections inconsistent with the limits of this preface.

It may be more to the purpose to remark, that the substance of the following discourse was delivered in London, at the anniversary of an academical institution, recently established in the neighbourhood of that metropolis, for educating young men for the ministry in the Baptist denomination. The institution to which we refer, is under the immediate superintendence of the Rev. William Newman.* I cannot let the present occasion pass, of earnestly and respectfully recommending this infant seminary to the patronage of the religious public. There was a time, we are aware, when doubts were entertained, in some serious minds, of the eligibility of training young men for the ministry, by a preparatory course of study. These scruples, we believe, have long since subsided, and a conviction felt by intelligent men of all denominations, of the expedience, if not the neces-

* W. H. Murch, D. D, is now the tutor, 1838.

sity, of instructing candidates for the ministry in the principles of science and literature. Learning is no longer dreaded as the enemy of piety; nor is it supposed that the orthodoxy of a public teacher of religion derives any security from his professed ignorance on every other subject. Along with this revolution in the sentiments of a certain class of christians, circumstances have arisen, connected with the more general diffusion of knowledge and the state of society, which render a higher degree of mental cultivation than was heretofore needed, indispensably requisite. The Baptist denomination, in common with other christians, have not failed to advert to this urgent and increasing demand for cultivated talent in their ministers, although they have long had occasion to lament the scantiness and inadequacy of their means of supplying it. To the Bristol Academy, the only seminary they possessed till within these few years, they feel the highest obligations, for supplying them with a succession of able and faithful pastors, who have done honour to their churches: and few things would give the patrons and founders of the seminary, for which I am pleading, more concern, than the suspicion of entertaining views unfavourable to that academy. They respect its claim of seniority; they revere the character of its excellent President; they contemplate, with the highest satisfaction, the beneficial result of its operations, conspicuous in most parts of the kingdom:—but they are too well acquainted with the disinterested motives of its friends and benefactors, to suspect them of wishing to monopolize the education of ministers connected with the denomination. They feel as little jealousy of the seminary recently established in Yorkshire, which has already produced good fruits, under the culture and superintendence of the excellent Mr. Steadman. Convinced, however, of there being still occasion for the enlargement of the means of instruction, and having, by the munificence of a generous individual, been presented with a house and premises well adapted to academical purposes, they could feel no hesitation in accepting so noble a gift, or in seconding the pious and benevolent

design of the founder. The institution is yet in its infancy, and subsists on a small scale. They look to the smiles of heaven, and to the liberality of a christian public, and, especially, to the piety and opulence of the professors of religion in the metropolis, who have never been wanting in the zealous support of institutions tending to promote the glory of God and the best interests of mankind, for such an enlargement of their funds and resources as, seconded by the efforts of its worthy tutor, shall render it a permanent and extensive blessing.

LEICESTER,
December 31, 1811.

A DISCOURSE.

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2 Corinthians iv. 1.

Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

As you have requested me to address you upon the present occasion, I am persuaded you will deem no apology necessary for the use of that freedom which the nature of the service to which you have invited me demands, combined with those sentiments of high esteem which your character will always inspire. Having with the accustomed solemnities, been invested with the pastoral office over this church, you will permit me to remind you of the discouragements on the one hand, and the supports on the other, which you may reasonably look for in your ministerial warfare, as far as they are naturally suggested to us by the passage of scripture selected for the basis of our present discourse.

If it is necessary for the private christian, before he assumes a religious profession, to count the cost; to the minister it cannot be less so, that he may not be surprised by unexpected trials, nor dismayed at the encounter of difficulties for which he has made no preparation. A just estimate of the nature and magnitude is an important qualification for the proper discharge of whatever functions we are called to exert. As you are neither a novice in the ministry, nor have failed to reflect deeply on the consequences of your present engagements, you will not suspect me of attempting, by the hints which may be suggested, to give you information, but merely *to stir up youv pure mind by way of remembrance.*

I. Let me request your attention to the sources of *dis-*

couragement connected with the office you have undertaken.

1. They are such as arise, in part, from the nature of the office itself, which is appointed for the purpose of converting souls to God, and conducting them in the path to eternal life. To you, in common with other christian pastors, is committed the ministry of reconciliation, the office of promulgating that system of truth which is designed to renew the world and sanctify the church. Under the highest authority you are enjoined to use your utmost efforts *to open blind eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* The bare mention of such an employment is enough to convince us the difficulties attending it are of no ordinary magnitude, and to make us exclaim with an apostle, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

The minds of men are naturally indisposed to the reception of divine truth. The truths of the gospel are not merely of a speculative nature, which need only to be stated with their proper evidence in order to ensure their success: there are in the mind latent prejudices against which they strongly militate, and which, when excited, naturally produce opposition. Mankind are disposed to think well of themselves, to view their virtues through a magnifying medium, and to cast their deficiencies and vices into the shade. Dissatisfied, as they often are, with their outward condition, they have yet little or no conviction of their spiritual wants; but with respect to these are ready to imagine, with the Laodiceans, that they *are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.* Hence, it is with extreme difficulty they are brought to acquiesce in the humiliating representations, made by the oracles of God, of their native guilt and misery. They will readily confess they are not perfectly innocent or faultless; they have their imperfections as well as others, but they are far from believing that they are actually under the wrath and displeasure of the Almighty. They feel, on the whole, satisfied with themselves, and, by setting their supposed good qualities and

actions against their bad ones, contrive to adjust their account in such a manner as leaves a considerable balance in their favour. On the mercy of God they feel no objection to profess their reliance; deeming it more decent, and even more safe, than to challenge his justice; but it is easy to perceive that the mercy of which they speak is of such a nature, that they would look upon it as an absurdity to suppose it could be withheld. In short, they are the whole who need no physician.

The gospel presupposes a charge of guilt; it assumes, as an indubitable fact, the universal apostasy of our race, and its consequent liability to perish under the stroke of the divine anger; nor can you acquit yourself of the imputation of handling the word of God deceitfully, if, from false delicacy or mistaken tenderness, you neglect the frequent inculcation of this momentous truth. You will find it, however, no easy matter to fasten the charge on the conscience; which, when it seems to be admitted, will often amount to nothing more than a vague and general acknowledgement, which leaves the heart quite unaffected. To convince effectually is, indeed, the work of a superior agent.

The very attempt to produce that humiliating sense of unworthiness and weakness, which is essential to a due reception of the gospel, will frequently excite disgust, should it terminate in no worse consequences. You will be reproached as the messenger of evil tidings, and suspected of taking a pleasure in overwhelming the soul with dark and melancholy forebodings. By a part of your hearers you will possibly be regarded as an unnatural character, and as having in your religion a tincture of what is savage and inhuman; in consequence of which, they who refuse to profit by your admonitions, will be apt to apply to you the language of the king of Israel, *I hate him, for he always prophesieth evil of me, and not good.* Of the common apostasy, one of the most distinguishing features is, a stupefaction and insensibility in relation to whatever is of a spiritual nature, together with a levity and carelessness which it requires the utmost effort of the christian ministry to dispel.

If you should be successful in awakening a salutary concern in the breasts of your hearers, and exciting them to inquire what they must do to be saved, fresh difficulties await you. The enemy will leave no artifice untried to divert it, and to wear it off, by such a succession of cares and vanities, that as much attention and address will be requisite to maintain it till it issues in a saving effect, as to produce it at first. There are many, who, after appearing for the time earnestly engaged in the pursuit of salvation, have, in consequence of stifling convictions, become more callous and insensible than ever, as iron is hardened in the fire. The grand scope of the christian ministry is to bring men home to Christ; but ere they arrive thither, there are numerous by-paths into which those who are awakened are in danger of diverting, and of finding a delusive repose, without coming, as humble penitents, to the foot of the cross. They are equally in danger of catching at premature consolation, and of sinking into listless despondency. *Withhold thy throat from thirst*, said the prophet Jeremiah, *and thy foot from being unshod; but thou saidst, there is no hope, for I have loved strangers, and after them I must go.* In the pursuit of eternal good, the heart is extremely inconstant and irresolute; easily prevailed on, when the peace it is in quest of is delayed, to desist from further seeking. During the first serious impressions, the light which unveils futurity often shines with too feeble a ray to produce that perfect and plenary conviction which permits the mind no longer to vacillate; and the fascination of sensible objects eclipses the powers of the world to come. Nor is there less to be apprehended from any other quarter. The conscience, roused to a just sense of the danger to which the sinner is exposed by his violation of the laws of God, is apt to derive consolation from this very uneasiness; by which means it is possible that the alarm, which is chiefly valuable on account of its tendency to produce a consent to the overtures of the gospel, may ultimately lull the mind into a deceitful repose. The number, we fear, is not small, of those, who, though they have never experienced a saving change, are yet

under no apprehensions respecting their state, merely because they can remember the time when they felt poignant convictions. Mistaking what are usually the preliminary steps to conversion, for conversion itself, they deduce from their former apprehensions an antidote against present fears; and from past prognostics of danger, an omen of their future safety. With persons of this description, the flashes of a superficial joy, arising from a presumption of being already pardoned, accompanied with some slight and transient relishes of the word of God, are substituted for that new birth, and that lively trust in the Redeemer, to which the promise of salvation inseparably belongs. Such were those who received the seed into stony ground, and who, having heard the word of God, *anon with joy received it, but having no depth of earth, it soon withered away.* Others endeavour to soothe the anguish of their minds by a punctual performance of certain religious exercises, and a partial reformation of conduct; in consequence of which they sink into mere formalists; and confounding the instruments of religion with the end, their apparent melioration of character diverts their attention from their real wants, and, by making them insensible of the extent of their malady, obstructs their cure. Instead of imploring the assistance of the great Physician, and implicitly complying with his prescriptions, they have recourse to palliatives, which assuage the anguish and the smart, without reaching the seat, or touching the core, of the disorder.

Were the change, which the gospel proposes to effect, less fundamental and extensive than it is, we might the more easily flatter ourselves with being able to carry its designs into execution. Did it aim merely to polish the exterior, to tame the wildness, and prune the luxuriance of nature, without the implanting of a new principle, the undertaking would be less arduous. But its scope is much higher; it proposes not merely to reform, but to renew; not so much to repair the moral edifice, as to build it afresh; not merely, by the remonstrances of reason, and the dictates of prudence, to engage men to lay a restraint upon their vices, but, by the inspiration of

truth, to become new creatures. The effects of the gospel on the heart are compared, by the prophet, to the planting of a wilderness, where what was barrenness and desolation before, is replenished with new productions. *I will plant in the wilderness the cedar-tree, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box-tree together, that they may know, and consider, and understand, that the hand of the Lord hath done this.* Although the change is frequently slow, and the Spirit of God, in effecting it, may proceed by imperceptible steps and gentle insinuations, the issue is invariably the same; nor can any representation do justice to its dignity. How great the skill requisite in those who are to be the instruments of producing it!

To arrest the attention of the careless, to subdue the pride and soften the obduracy of the human heart, so that it shall stoop to the authority of an unseen Saviour, is a task which surpasses the utmost efforts of human ability, unaided by a superior power. In attempting to realize the design of the christian ministry, we are proposing to call the attention of men from the things which are seen and temporal, to things unseen and eternal; to conduct them from a life of sense to a life of faith; to subdue, or weaken at least, the influence of a world, which, being always present, is incessantly appealing to the senses, and soliciting the heart, in favour of a state, whose very existence is ascertained only by testimony. We call upon them to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, to deny the strongest and most inveterate propensities, and to renounce the enjoyments which they have tasted and felt, for the sake of a happiness to which they have no relish. We must charge *them*, as they value their salvation, not to love the world, who have been accustomed to make it the sole object of their attachment, and to return to their allegiance to that almighty and invisible Ruler from whom they have deeply revolted. We present to them, it is true, *a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined;* we invite them to entertainments more ample and exquisite, than, but for the gospel, it had entered into the heart of man to conceive; but we

address our invitations to minds fatally indisposed, alienated from the life of God, with little sense of the value of his favour, and no delight in his converse. The souls we address, though originally formed for these enjoyments, and utterly incapable of being happy without them, have lost, through the fall, that right taste and apprehension of things, which is requisite for the due appreciation of these blessings; and, like Ezekiel, we prophesy to dry bones in the valley of Vision, which will never live but under the visitation of that breath which bloweth where it listeth. This indisposition to the things of God, so radical and incurable by human power, as it has been a frequent source of discouragement to the faithful minister, so it would prove an invincible obstacle to success, did that success depend upon human agency.

2. To these difficulties, which arise from the nature of the work, abstractedly considered, must be added, those which are modified by a variety of circumstances, and which result from that diversity of temper, character, and situation, which prevails in our auditory. To the several classes of which it consists, it is necessary *rightly to divide the word of truth, and give to every one his portion of meat in due season.* The epidemic malady of our nature assumes so many shapes, and appears under such a variety of symptoms, that these may be considered as so many distinct diseases, which demand a proportionate variety in the method of treatment; nor will the same prescription suit all cases. A different set of truths, a different mode of address is requisite to rouse the careless, to beat down the arrogance of a self-justifying spirit, from what is necessary to comfort the humble and contrite in heart; nor is it easy to say which we should most anxiously guard against, the infusion of a false peace, or inflaming the wounds which we ought to heal. A loose and indiscriminate manner of applying the promises and threatenings of the gospel, is ill-judged and pernicious; it is not possible to conceive a more effectual method of depriving the sword of the Spirit of its edge, than adopting that lax generality of representation, which leaves its hearer nothing to apply, presents no incentive to self-ex-

amination, and, besides its utter inefficiency, disgusts by the ignorance of human nature, or the disregard to its best interests, it infallibly betrays. Without descending to such a minute specification of circumstances, as shall make our addresses personal, they ought unquestionably to be characteristic, that the conscience of the audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every individual know where to class himself. The preacher who aims at doing good will endeavour, above all things, to insulate his hearers, to place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by losing himself in the crowd. At the day of judgement, the attention excited by the surrounding scene, the strange aspect of nature, the dissolution of the elements, and the last trump, will have no other effect than to cause the reflections of the sinner to return with a more overwhelming tide on his own character, his sentence, his unchanging destiny; and amid the innumerable millions who surround him, he will *mourn apart.* It is thus the christian minister should endeavour to prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes of every one of his hearers on himself.

To men of different casts and complexions, it is obvious, a corresponding difference in the selection of topics, and the method of appeal, is requisite. Some are only capable of digesting the first principles of religion, on whom it is necessary often to inculcate the same lessons, with the reiteration of parental solicitude: there are others of a wider grasp of comprehension, who must be indulged with an ampler variety, and to whom views of religion less obvious, less obtrusive, and demanding a more vigorous exercise of the understanding, are peculiarly adapted. Some are accustomed to contemplate every subject in a light so cool and argumentative, that they are not easily impressed with any thing which is not presented in the garb of reasoning; nor apt, though firm believers in Revelation, to be strongly moved by naked assertions, even from that quarter. There are others of a softer temperament, who are more easily won by tender strokes of pathos. Minds of an obdurate make, and

which have been rendered callous by long habits of vice, must be appalled and subdued by the terrors of the Lord; while others are capable of being *drawn with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man. Some we must save with fear, plucking them out of the fire; on others we must have compassion, making a difference.* You will recollect that he who spake as never man spake, mild, gentle, insinuating in his addresses to the multitude, reserved the thunder of his denunciations for sanctimonious hypocrites. In this part of our ministerial function, we shall do well to imitate St. Paul, who became "all things to all men, that he might win some;" combining, in his efforts for the salvation of souls, the utmost simplicity of intention with the utmost versatility of address.

May I be permitted to remark, though it seem a digression, that in the mode of conducting our public ministrations, we are, perhaps, too formal and mechanical; that in the distribution of the matter of our sermons, we indulge too little variety, and, exposing our plan in all its parts, abate the edge of curiosity, by enabling the hearer to anticipate what we intend to advance? Why should that force which surprise gives to every emotion derived from just and affecting sentiments, be banished from the pulpit, when it is found of such moment in every other kind of public address? I cannot but imagine the first preachers of the gospel appeared before their audience with a more free and unfettered air than is consistent with the narrow trammels to which, in these latter ages, discourses from the pulpit are confined. The sublime emotions with which they were fraught, would have rendered them impatient of such restrictions; nor could they suffer the impetuous stream of argument, expostulation, and pathos, to be weakened, by diverting it into the artificial reservoirs, prepared in the heads and particulars of a modern sermon. Method, we are aware, is an essential ingredient in every discourse designed for the instruction of mankind, but it ought never to force itself on the attention as an object apart; never appear to be an end, instead of an instrument; or beget a suspicion of the sentiments being introduced for the sake of the

method, not the method for the sentiments. Let the experiment be tried on some of the best specimens of ancient eloquence; let an oration of Cicero or Demosthenes be stretched upon a Procrustes' bed of this sort, and, if I am not greatly mistaken, the flame and enthusiasm which have excited admiration in all ages, will instantly evaporate; yet no one perceives a want of method in these immortal compositions, nor can any thing be conceived more remote from incoherent rhapsody.

To return to the subject: whatever the mode of address, or whatever the choice of topics, these are two qualities inseparable from religious instruction; these are *seriousness* and *affection.* In the most awful denunciations of the divine displeasure, an air of unaffected tenderness should be preserved, that while with unsparing fidelity we declare the whole counsel of God, it may appear we are actuated by a genuine spirit of compassion. A hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God, is not only barbarous and inhuman, but calculated, by inspiring disgust, to rob them of all their efficacy. If the awful part of our message, which may be styled the burden of the Lord, ever fall with due weight on our hearers, it will be when it is delivered with a trembling hand and faltering lips; and we may then expect them to realize its solemn import, when they perceive that we ourselves are ready to sink under it. "Of whom I have told you before," said St. Paul, and "now tell you *weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." What force does that affecting declaration derive from those tears! An affectionate manner insinuates itself into the heart, renders it soft and pliable, and disposes it to imbibe the sentiments and follow the impulse of the speaker. Whoever has attended to the effect of addresses from the pulpit, must have perceived how much of their impression depends upon this quality, which gives to sentiments comparatively trite, a power over the mind beyond what the most striking and original conceptions possess without it.

Near akin to this, and not inferior in importance, is the second quality we have mentioned, *seriousness*. It

is scarcely necessary to remark, how offensive and unnatural is every violation of it in a religious discourse, which is, however, of wider extent than is generally imagined, including not merely jesting, buffoonery, and undisguised levity of every sort, but also whatsoever, in composition or manner, is inconsistent with the supposition of the speaker being deeply in earnest; such as sparkling ornaments, far-fetched images, and that exuberance of flowers which seems evidently designed to gratify the fancy, rather than to touch the heart. When St. Paul recommends to Timothy that *sound speech which cannot be condemned*, it is probable he refers as much to the propriety of the vehicle, as to the purity of the instruction. There is, permit me to remind you, a sober dignity both of language and of sentiment, suited to the representations of religion in all its variety of topics, from which the inspired writers never depart, and which it will be our wisdom to imitate. In describing the pleasures of devotion, or the joys of heaven, there is nothing weak, sickly, or effeminate: a chaste severity pervades their delineations, and whatever they say appears to emanate from a serious mind, accustomed to the contemplation of great objects, without ever sinking under them from imbecility, or attempting to supply a deficiency of interest, by puerile exaggerations and feeble ornaments. The exquisite propriety of their representations is chiefly to be ascribed to their habitual seriousness; and the latter to their seeing things as they are.

3. Having touched on the principal difficulties attending the *public* exercise of the ministry, it may be expected something will be said on its more private functions. To affirm it to be the duty of a pastor to visit his people *often*, is, perhaps, affirming too much; the more frequently he converses with them, however, provided his conversation be properly conducted, the more will his person be endeared, and his ministry acceptable. The seasonable introduction of religious topics is often of such admirable use, that there are few qualities more enviable than the talent of "teaching from house to house;" though the modern state of manners, I am aware, has

rendered this branch of the pastoral office much more difficult than in former times. In a country village, where there is more simplicity, less dissipation, and less hurry of business than in large towns, prudent exertions of this kind may be considered as eminently proper and beneficial. The extent to which they should be carried must be determined by circumstances, without attempting to prescribe any other rule than this, that the conversation of a christian minister should be always such as is adapted to strengthen, not impair, the impression of his public instructions. Though it is not necessary, nor expedient, for him to be always conversing on the subject of religion, his conversation should invariably have a religious tendency; that whatever excursions he indulges, the return to serious topics may be easy and natural. The whole cast of his character should be such as is adapted to give weight to the exercise of his ministerial functions. On the peculiar force with which the obligations of virtue attach to a christian teacher, the purity and correctness of your own conduct, while it would embolden me to speak with the greater freedom, make it less necessary for me to insist. You are aware that moral delinquency in *him*, produces a sensation as when an armour-bearer fainteth; that he can neither stand nor fall by himself; and that it is impossible for him to deviate essentially from the path of rectitude, without incurring the guilt and infamy of Jeroboam, who is never mentioned but to be stigmatized as he *who taught Israel to sin*. *Be thou an ensample to the flock in faith, in purity, in conversation, in doctrine, in charity.* Instead of satisfying ourselves in the acquisition of virtue with the attainments of a learner, we must aspire to the perfection of a master; and give to our conduct the correctness of a pattern. We are called to such a conquest over the world, and such an exhibition of the spirit of Christ, as shall not merely exempt us from censure, but excite to emulation. *Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world*, said our Saviour to his disciples, whom he was about to send forth in the character of public teachers. As persons to whom the conduct of souls is committed,

we cannot make a wrong step without endangering the interests of others; so that if we neglect to take our soundings, and inspect our chart, ours is the misconduct of the pilot, who is denied the privilege of perishing alone. The immoral conduct of a christian minister is little less than a public triumph over the religion he inculcates: and when we recollect the frailty of our nature, the snares to which we are exposed, and the wiles of our adversary, who will proportion his efforts to the advantages resulting from his success, we must be aware how much the necessity of maintaining an exemplary conduct adds to the difficulty of the ministerial function.

With the utmost propriety of conduct, and the greatest skill exerted in your work, we dare not flatter you with the prospect of unmingled success. Under the most judicious method of treatment, the maladies of some will prove incurable, and they will perish under your hand. While to some the gospel is a *savour of life unto life*, to others it will prove *the savour of death unto death;* and in the course of your labours you will meet with frequent disappointments where you have formed the most sanguine expectations. *Some who did run well, will afterwards be hindered; and of others, who have clean escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, being afterwards entangled therein, the latter end will be worse than the beginning.* Many a Demas, it is probable, will forsake you, *having loved this present world;* and by many of your hearers, who now evince the most zealous attachment, you may hereafter be considered as an enemy, because you tell them the truth. In certain instances, your ministry will be attended with consequences which you cannot contemplate without deep concern; for the sword of the Spirit is an awful weapon, which will exert, where it fails to inflict a salutary wound, its *destructive* edge. Against those of your hearers who reject your message, though now an ambassador of peace, and often a weeping suppliant at their feet, you will ere long appear a swift witness before God, and be compelled by your voice to exasperate the accents

of vengeance, and augment the vials of wrath. *You are set for the rising and falling of many in Israel.*

II. But it is time to turn to a more pleasing part of our subject, and to remind you of some of the supports by which these sources of discouragement are balanced.

1. The office you have undertaken is of divine institution. The unhappy disputes which have prevailed in the church respecting the proper channels for conveying, and the legitimate mode of vesting it, are so far from weakening or perplexing the evidence of this truth, that they may be considered as so many concurrent suffrages in its favour; since it is allowed, on all hands, that the christian ministry is an ordinance of God; an expedient for the improvement of mankind, of his devising, and supported by his authority. But of that wisdom which pervades the works of God, the church is the principal scene; *to the intent*, saith the apostle, *that to principalities and powers, might be made known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.* Hence we may be certain, that so leading a branch of its constitution as that under our consideration cannot fail of being adapted, in the best possible manner, to promote the interest of religion; nor is it difficult to perceive, that if men are to be wrought upon by reason and persuasion, the setting apart an order for the express purpose of instructing them in the concerns of salvation must have a beneficial tendency; an order, be it remembered, not appointed like the priests of pagan antiquity, for the performance of ceremonies, but for the inculcation of truth; not to conduct the pomp of lustrations and sacrifices, but to *watch for souls as those that must give an account.* Nothing similar to this was known in the heathen religions; it is peculiar to christianity, and evincing the simple wisdom of its author, is as original in its conception, as it is admirable in its effects. Its simplicity, its distance from whatever is dazzling in the eyes of mankind, is one of its highest recommendations; for the christian minister is beautifully com-

pared to a fisherman, who would only be embarrassed by those instruments and appendages which belong to more splendid, but less useful employments.

2. Another consideration calculated to afford us encouragement is, that the materials of our work are ready furnished to our hand, and, at the same time, of a nature admirably adapted to our purpose. Our office is that of stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom; our duty, faithfully to dispense the stores which superior wisdom and opulence have provided. It is not necessary for us to stretch our invention in the discovery of topics and arguments fitted to move the mind, and impel it in a right direction, which, if we may judge from past experience, would be a most unpromising undertaking. A doctrine, full, pure, perfect, to which nothing can be added without debasing its spirit, nothing taken away without impairing its proportions, is committed to our trust, to be retained and preserved, just as we have received it, and delivered to our hearers in all its primitive simplicity. Like the works of nature, while it exhibits, at first view, an impress of its author, in the unequivocal character it bears of purity and majesty, it improves on a closer examination, and the more deeply it is investigated, the more the wisdom of the contrivance, in its exquisite adaptation to the state and condition of mankind, becomes conspicuous. As the discovery of a way of salvation for a fallen race, of the method by which a guilty and degenerate creature may recover the image and favour of his Maker, which we must ever remember is its most essential characteristic, what is wanting to its perfection? what information or assurance beyond what it contains, calculated to awe, enlighten, convince, and encourage? The facts it exhibits, supported by clear and indubitable testimony, are more extraordinary than ever entered the mind of man in its widest excursions, combining all the sobriety of truth, with more than the grandeur of fiction; and the doctrines connected with these facts, by the easiest and most natural inference, are of infinite moment. To a serious mind,

the truths of the christian religion appear with such an air of unaffected greatness, that, in comparison with these, all other speculations and reasonings seem like the amusements of childhood. When the Deity, the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection of the Son of God, the sanctification of the church, and the prospects of glory, have engaged our contemplation, we feel, in turning our attention to other objects, a strange descent, and perceive, with the certainty of demonstration, that, as the earth is too narrow for the full developement of these mysteries, they are destined by their consequences and effects, to impregnate an eternal duration. We are not at all surprised at finding the ancient prophets searched into these mysteries with great but unsuccessful diligence, that the angels desire to look into them, or that the apostles were lost in the contemplation of those riches which they proclaimed and imparted. Are you desirous of fixing the attention of your hearers strongly on their everlasting concerns? No peculiar refinement of thought, no subtlety of reasoning, much less the pompous exaggerations of secular eloquence, are wanted for that purpose: you have only to imbibe deeply the mind of Christ, to let his doctrine enlighten, his love inspire your heart, and your situation, in comparison of other speakers, will resemble that of the angel of the apocalypse, who was seen standing in the sun. Draw your instructions immediately from the Bible; the more immediately they are derived from that source, and the less they are tinctured with human distinctions and refinements, the more salutary, and the more efficacious. Let them be taken fresh from the spring. *You*, I am persuaded, will not satisfy yourself with the study of Christianity in narrow jejune abridgements and systems, but contemplate it, in its utmost extent, as it subsists in the sacred oracles; and, in investigating these, you will permit your reason and conscience an operation, as free and unfettered, as if none had examined them before. The neglect of this produces, too often, an artificial scarcity, where some of the choicest provisions of the household are exploded or overlooked

When we inculcate, with so much earnestness, an attention to the mind of Christ, as exhibited in the Scriptures, let us not be understood to exclude his precepts, or to countenance, for a moment, the too frequent neglect of Christian morality. While you delight in displaying the riches of divine grace, conspicuous in the work of redemption, as the grand motive to love and trust in the Redeemer, you will not forget frequently to admonish your hearers that he only *loveth him who keepeth his sayings;* the illustration of which, in their bearings upon the different relations and circumstances of life, will form, if you follow the apostolic example, a most important branch of your ministry. Not content with committing the obligation of morality to the arbitration of feeling, much less with faintly hinting at it, as an obvious inference from orthodox doctrine, you will illustrate its principles with an energy, a copiousness, a fulness of detail, proportioned to its acknowledged importance. You will not be silent on the precepts, from an apprehension of infringing on the freedom of the gospel, nor sink the character of the legislator in that of the Saviour of the church. A morality more elevated and pure than is to be met with in the pages of Seneca or Epictetus will breathe through your sermons, founded on a basis which every understanding can comprehend, and enforced by sanctions which nothing but the utmost stupidity can despise—a morality, of which the love of God, and a devoted attachment to the Redeemer, are the plastic soul, which, pervading every limb, and expressing itself in every lineament of the new creature, gives it a beauty all its own. As it is the genuine fruit of just and affecting views of divine truth, you will never sever it from its parent stock, nor indulge the fruitless hope of leading men to holiness, without strongly imbuing them with the spirit of the gospel. Truth and holiness are, in the christian system, so intimately allied, that the warm and faithful inculcation of the one lays the only foundation for the other. For the *illustration* of particular branches of morals, we may consult pagan writers on ethics with advantage; but in

search of *principles*, it is at our peril that we desert the school of Christ; since " we are complete in him," and all the moral excellence to which we can aspire is but christianity embodied; or, if we may be allowed to change the figure, the impress of the gospel upon the heart. The perfection of the christian system, considered as the instrument of renovating the human mind, is the second consideration.

3. The third consideration to which I would direct your attention, is, that of its being the dispensation of the Spirit. To this the apostle immediately refers in the context, where he is contrasting the Christian with the Jewish institute. *Who hath also made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious?* From this circumstance he infers the superior dignity of the christian ministry. The miraculous gifts, intended for a sign to unbelievers, and to aid the gospel, during its first struggle with the powers of pagan darkness, have long since ceased with the exigency that called them forth; but the renewing and sanctifying agency of the Spirit remains, and will continue to the end of time; the express declaration of our Saviour not admitting a doubt of its perpetuity. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* To the world, who, in their unrenewed state, are unsusceptible of his sanctifying impress, he is promised in the preparatory form of a spirit of conviction; to believers, he is promised as an indwelling principle, an ever-present Deity, who consecrates the hearts of the faithful to be his perpetual abode. Hence the ministers of Christ are not dependent for success on the force of moral suasion; not merely the teachers of an external religion, including truths the most momentous, and duties of the highest obligation;

they are also the instruments through whom a supernatural agency is exerted. And hence, in the conversion of souls, we are not to compare the difficulties to be surmounted with the feeble resources of human power, but with his, with whom nothing is impossible. To this the inspired historian every where directs our attention, as alone sufficient to account for the signal success which crowned the labours of the first preachers. If a great multitude at Antioch turned to the Lord, it was because *the hand of the Lord was with them;* if Lydia believed, in consequence of giving attention to the things that were spoken, it was because the *Lord opened her heart;* if Paul planted and Apollos watered with success, it was *the Lord who gave the increase;* and highly as they were endowed, and though invested with such extensive authority, they did not presume to count upon any thing from themselves; their sufficiency was of God. As the possibility of such an influence can be doubted by none who believe in a Deity, so the peculiar consolation derived from the doctrine that asserts it seems to be this, that it renders what was merely possible, certain; what was before vague and undetermined, fixed, by reducing the interposition of the Almighty, in the concerns of salvation, to a stated method and a settled law. The communication of the Spirit, to render the gospel efficacious, becomes a standing ordinance of heaven, and a full security for its final triumph over every opposing force. *My word,* said the Lord by the prophet, *shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish the thing whereunto I sent it.* At the same time, connected as it is by the very tenour of the promise, with the publication of an external revelation, and professing to set its seal only to the testimony of Jesus, it precludes, as far as possible, every enthusiastic pretension, by leaving the appeal to scripture as full and uncontrolled as if no such agency were supposed. It is strange that any should be found to deny a doctrine so consolatory, under the pretence of its derogating from the sufficiency of Revelation, when it not only ascribes to it all the efficacy that can belong to an instrument, or external means, but

confers the highest honour upon it, by marking it out as the only fountain of instruction to which the agency of the Deity is inseparably attached. The idea of his immediate interposition must necessarily increase our veneration for whatever is connected with it; and let it ever be remembered, that the internal illumination of the Spirit is merely intended to qualify the mind for distinctly perceiving, and cordially embracing those objects, and no other, which are exhibited in the written word. To dispel prejudice, to excite a disposition for inquiry, and to infuse that love of the truth, without which we can neither be transformed by its power nor bow to its dictates, is the grand scope of spiritual agency; and how this should derogate from the dignity of the truth itself, it is not easy to conceive. The inseparable alliance between the Spirit and the Word secures the harmony of the divine dispensations; and since that Spirit of truth can never contradict himself, whatever impulse he may give, whatever disposition he may communicate, it involves no irreverence towards that divine agent to compare his operations with that standing revelation, which, equally claiming him for its author, he has expressly appointed for the trial of the spirits.

Let me earnestly entreat you, by keeping close to the fountain of grace, to secure a large measure of its influence. In your private studies, and in your public performances, remember your absolute dependence on superior aid; let your conviction of this dependence become so deep and practical as to prevent your attempting any thing in your own strength, after the example of St. Paul, who, when he had occasion to advert to his labours in the gospel, checks himself by adding, with ineffable modesty, *yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* From that vivid perception of truth, that full assurance of faith, which is its inseparable attendant, you will derive unspeakable advantage in addressing your hearers; a seriousness, tenderness, and majesty, will pervade your discourses, beyond what the greatest unassisted talent can command. In the choice of your subjects it will lead you to what is most solid and useful, while it enables you

to handle them in a manner the most efficacious and impressive. Possessed of this celestial unction, you will not be under the temptation of neglecting a plain gospel in quest of amusing speculations, or unprofitable novelties; the most ordinary topics will open themselves with a freshness and interest, as though you had never considered them before: and *the things of the Spirit* will display their inexhaustible variety and depth. You will pierce the invisible world; you will look, so to speak, into eternity, and present the essence and core of religion, while too many preachers, for want of spiritual discernment, rest satisfied with the surface and the shell. It will not allow us to throw one grain of incense on the altar of vanity; it will make us forget ourselves so completely as to convince our hearers we do so; and, displacing every thing else from the attention, leave nothing to be felt or thought of, but the majesty of truth, and the realities of eternity.

In proportion to the degree in which you possess this sacred influence, will be the earnestness with which you implore it in behalf of your hearers. Often *will you bow the knee to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he will grant unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of their calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance among them that believe.*

On the one hand, it deserves attention, that the most eminent and successful preachers of the gospel in different communities, a Brainerd, a Baxter, and a Schwartz, have been the most conspicuous for a simple dependence upon spiritual aid; and, on the other, that no success whatever has attended the ministrations of those by whom this doctrine has been either neglected or denied. They have met with such a rebuke of their presumption, in the total failure of their efforts, that none will contend for the reality of divine interposition, as far as *they* are concerned; for when has "the arm of the Lord been revealed" to those pretended teachers of christianity, who believe there is no such arm? We must leave them to

labour in a field, respecting which God has commanded the clouds not to rain upon it. As if conscious of this, of late they have turned their efforts into a new channel, and, despairing of the conversion of sinners, have confined themselves to the seduction of the faithful; in which, it must be confessed, they have acted in a manner perfectly consistent with their principles; the propagation of heresy requiring, at least, no *divine* assistance.

4. Let me request you to consider the dignity and importance of the profession which you have assumed. I am aware that the bare mention of these, as attributes of the christian ministry (especially when exercised among Protestant dissenters), may provoke a smile: we contend, however, that if the dignity of an employment is to be estimated, not by the glitter of external appearances, but by the magnitude and duration of the consequences involved in its success, the ministerial function is a high and honourable one. Though it is not permitted us to magnify ourselves, we may be allowed to magnify our office; and, indeed, the juster the apprehensions we entertain of what belongs to it, the deeper the conviction we shall feel of our defects. Independently of every other consideration, that office cannot be mean which the Son of God condescended to sustain; for *the word which we preach first began to be spoken by the Lord;* and, while he sojourned upon earth, that Prince of life was chiefly employed in publishing his own religion. That office cannot be mean, whose end is the recovery of man to his original purity and happiness—the illumination of the understanding—the communication of truth—and the production of principles which will bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. As the material part of the creation was formed for the sake of the immaterial; and of the latter the most momentous characteristic is its moral and accountable nature, or, in other words, its capacity of virtue and vice; that labour cannot want dignity, which is exerted in improving man in his highest character, and fitting him for his eternal destination. Here alone is certainty and durability: for, however highly we may esteem the arts and sciences, which polish our species

and promote the welfare of society; whatever reverence we may feel, and ought to feel, for those laws and institutions whence it derives the security necessary for enabling it to enlarge its resources and develope its energies, we cannot forget that these are but the embellishments of a scene we must shortly quit—the decorations of a theatre, from which the eager spectators and applauded actors must soon retire. *The end of all things is at hand.* Vanity is inscribed on every earthly pursuit, on all sublunary labour; its materials, its instruments, and its objects will alike perish. An incurable taint of mortality has seized upon, and will consume them ere long. The acquisitions derived from religion, the graces of a renovated mind, are alone permanent. This is the mystic enclosure, rescued from the empire of change and death; this is the field which the Lord has blessed; and this word of the kingdom the seed, which alone produces immortal fruit, the very bread of life, with which, under a higher economy, the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, will feed his flock, and replenish his elect, through eternal ages. How high and awful a function is that which proposes to establish in the soul an interior dominion—to illuminate its powers by a celestial light—and introduce it to an intimate, ineffable, and unchanging alliance with the Father of spirits! What an honour to be employed as the instrument of conducting that mysterious process by which men are born of God; to expel from the heart the venom of the old serpent; to purge the conscience from invisible stains of guilt; to release the passions from the bondage of corruption, and invite them to soar aloft into the regions of uncreated light and beauty; *to say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves!* These are the fruits which arise from the successful discharge of the christian ministry; these the effects of the gospel, wherever it becomes the power of God unto salvation: and the interests which they create, the joy which they diffuse, are felt in other worlds.

In insisting on the dignity attached to the ministerial office, it is far from my intention to supply fuel to vanity,

or suggest such ideas of yourself as shall tempt you to "lord it over God's heritage." Let the importance of your station be rather felt and acknowledged in its beneficial results, than ostentatiously displayed; and the consciousness of it, instead of being suffered to evaporate in authoritative airs and pompous pretensions, produce a concentration of your powers. If the great apostle was content to be a helper of the joy, without claiming dominion over the faith, of his converts, how far should we be from advancing such a claim! If he served the Lord with humility and many tears; if he appeared among the churches which he planted, "in fear, and in weakness, and with much trembling," we may learn how possible it is to combine, with true dignity, the most unassuming deportment, and the deepest conviction of our weakness and unworthiness, with a vigorous discharge of whatever belongs to the apostolic, much more to the pastoral, office. The proper use to be made of such considerations as have now been suggested is, to *stir up the gift which is in us*, to apply ourselves to our work with becoming resolution, and anticipate, in dependence on the divine blessing, important effects. The moment we permit ourselves to think lightly of the christian ministry, our right arm is withered; nothing but imbecility and relaxation remains. For no man ever excelled in a profession to which he did not feel an attachment bordering on enthusiasm; though what in other professions is enthusiasm, is, in ours, the dictate of sobriety and truth.

5. Recollect, for your encouragement, the reward that awaits the faithful minister. Such is the mysterious condescension of divine grace, that although it reserves to itself the exclusive honour of being the fountain of all, yet, by the employment of human agency in the completion of its designs, it contrives to multiply its gifts, and to lay a foundation for eternal rewards. When the church, in the perfection of beauty, shall be presented to Christ, as a bride adorned for her husband, the faithful pastor will appear as the friend of the bridegroom, who *greatly rejoices because of the bridegroom's voice.* His

joy will be the joy of his Lord, inferior in degree, but of the same nature, and arising from the same sources: while he will have the peculiar happiness of reflecting that he has contributed to it; contributed, as an humble instrument, to that glory and felicity of which he will be conscious he is utterly unworthy to partake. To have been himself the object of mercy, to have been the means of imparting it to others, and of dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ, will produce a pleasure which can never be adequately felt or understood, until we see him as he is. From that oneness of spirit, from that inseparable conjunction of interest, which will then be experienced in its utmost extent, will arise a capacity of sharing the triumph of the Redeemer, and of participating in the delight with which he will survey his finished work, when a new and fairer creation shall arise out of the ruins of the first. And is this the end, he will exclaim, of all my labours, my toils, and watchings, my expostulation with sinners, and my efforts to console the faithful! and is this the issue of that ministry under which I was often ready to sink! and this the glory, of which I heard so much, understood so little, and announced to my hearers with lisping accents, and a stammering tongue! well might it be styled the glory *to be revealed.* Auspicious day! on which I embarked in this undertaking, on which the love of Christ, with a sweet and sacred violence, impelled me to feed his sheep and to feed his lambs. With what emotion shall we, who, being entrusted with so holy a ministry, shall find mercy to be faithful, hear that voice from heaven, *Rejoice and be glad, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready!* with what rapture shall we recognize, amidst an innumerable multitude, the seals of our ministry, the persons whom we have been the means of conducting to that glory!

Hence we discern the futility of the objection against the doctrine of future rewards, drawn from an apprehension, that to be actuated by such a motive, argues a mean and mercenary disposition; since the reward to which we aspire, in this instance, at least, grows out of the em-

ployment in which we are engaged, and will consist in enjoyments which can only be felt and perceived by a refined and elevated spirit. The success of our undertaking will, in reality, reward itself, by the complete gratification it will afford to the sentiments of devotion and benevolence, which, in their highest perfection, form the principal ingredient in future felicity. To have co-operated in any degree towards the accomplishment of that purpose of the Deity to reconcile all things to himself, by reducing them to the obedience of his Son; which is the ultimate end of all his works: to be the means of recovering, though it were but an inconsiderable portion of a lapsed and degenerate race, to eternal happiness, will yield a satisfaction exactly commensurate to the force of our benevolent sentiments, and the degree of our loyal attachment to the supreme Potentate. The consequences involved in *saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins*, will be duly appreciated in that world where the worth of souls, and the malignity of sin, are fully understood; while, to extend the triumphs of the Redeemer, by forming him in the hearts of men, will produce a transport which can only be equalled by the gratitude and love we shall feel towards the Source of all our good.

Before I close this discourse, which has, perhaps, already detained you too long, let me suggest one reflection which so naturally arises from the view we have taken of the ministerial office, that I cannot think it right to pass it over in silence. The consideration to which we allude respects the advantages possessed by the christian minister for the cultivation of personal piety. *Blessed is the man*, said the royal Psalmist, *whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee: blessed are they who dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee.* If he was so strongly impressed with a conviction of the high privilege annexed to the priesthood, by virtue of its being allowed a nearer approach to God, in the services of the sanctuary, the situation of a christian minister is not less distinguished, nor less desirable. It is the only one in which our general calling as christians,

and our particular calling as men, perfectly coincide. In a life occupied in actions that terminate in the present moment, and in cares and pursuits, extremely disproportionate to the dignity of our nature, but rendered necessary by the imperfection of our state; it is but little of their time that the greater part of mankind can devote to the direct and immediate pursuit of their eternal interests. A few remnants, snatched from the business of life, is all that most can bestow. In our profession, the full force and vigour of the mind may be exerted on that which will employ it for ever; on *religion*, the final centre of repose; the goal to which all things tend, which gives to time all its importance, to eternity all its glory; apart from which man is a shadow, his very existence a riddle, and the stupendous scenes which surround him, as incoherent and unmeaning as the leaves which the Sybil scattered in the wind. Our inaptitude to be affected in any measure proportioned to the intrinsic value of the interest in which we are concerned, and the objects with which we are conversant, is partly to be ascribed to the corruption of nature, partly to the limitation of our faculties. As far as this disproportion is capable of being corrected, the pursuits connected with our office are unquestionably best adapted to that purpose, by closely fixing the attention on objects which can never be contemned, but in consequence of being forgotten; nor ever surveyed with attention, without filling the whole sphere of vision. Though the scene of our labour is on earth, the things to which it relates subsist in eternity. We can give no account of our office, much less discharge any branch of it with propriety and effect, without adverting to a future state of being; while, in a happy exemption from the tumultuous cares of life, our only concern with mankind, as far as it respects our official character, is to promote their everlasting welfare; our only business on earth, the very same that employs those exalted spirits, who are sent forth on embassies of mercy, *to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation.* Our duties and pursuits are distinguished from all others by their immediate relation to the ultimate end of human existence;

so that, while secular employments can be rendered innocent only by an extreme care to avoid the pollutions which they are so liable to contract, the ministerial functions bear an indelible impress of sanctity. The purposes accomplished by the ministry of the gospel, in the restoration of a fallen creature to the image of his Maker, are not among the *things which were made for man:* they are the *things for which man was made;* since, without regard to time or place, they are essential to his perfection and happiness. How much of heaven is naturally connected with an office whose sole purpose is to conduct man thither! and what a superiority to the love of the world may be expected from men who are appointed to publish that dispensation which reveals its danger, detects its vanity, rebukes its disorders, and foretells its destruction!

He must know little of the world, and still less of his own heart, who is not aware how difficult it is, amidst the corrupting examples with which it abounds, to maintain the spirit of devotion unimpaired, or to preserve, in their due force and delicacy, those vivid moral impressions, that quick perception of good, and instinctive abhorrence of evil, which form the chief characteristic of a pure and elevated mind. These, like the morning dew, are easily brushed off in the collisions of worldly interest, or exhaled by the meridian sun. Hence the necessity of frequent intervals of retirement, when the mind may recover its scattered powers, and renew its strength by a devout application to the Fountain of all grace.

To the ordinary occupations of life we are rather indebted for the trial of our virtue than for the matter, or the motive; and, however criminal it would be to neglect them, in our present state, they can only be reduced under the dominion of religion, by a general intention of pleasing God. But, in carrying into effect the designs of the gospel, we are communicating that pure element of good, which, like the solar light, pervades every part of the universe, and forms, there is every reason to believe, the most essential ingredient in the felicity of all created beings.

If, in the actual commerce of the world, the noblest principles are often sacrificed to mean expedients, and the rules of moral rectitude made to bend to the indulgence of vain and criminal passions, how happy for us that we are under the necessity of contemplating them in their abstract grandeur, of viewing them as an emanation of the divine beauty: as the immutable law of the creation, embodied in the character of the Saviour, and illustrated in the elevated sentiments, the holy lives, and triumphant deaths, of prophets, saints, and martyrs! *We* are called, every moment, to ascend to first principles, *to stand in the council of God*, and to imbibe the dictates of celestial wisdom in their *first* communication, before they become debased, and contaminated, by a mixture with grosser elements.

The bane of human happiness is ordinarily not so much an absolute ignorance of what is best, as an inattention to it, accompanied with a habit of not adverting to prospects the most certain and the most awful. But how can we be supposed to contract this inadvertence, who are incessantly engaged in placing truth in every possible light, tracing it in its utmost extent, and exhibiting it in all its evidence? Can we be supposed to forget *that day and that hour, of which no man knoweth*, who are stationed as watchmen to give the alarm, to announce the first symptoms of danger, and to cry in the ears of a sleeping world, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh:* or, however inattentive others may be to the approach of our Lord, can it ever vanish from our minds, who are detained by him in his sanctuary, on purpose to preserve it pure, to trim the golden lamps, and maintain the hallowed fire, that he may find nothing neglected, or in disorder, when he *shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom we delight in?*

Men are ruined in their eternal interests, by failing to look within; by being so absorbed in the pursuit of earthly good, as to neglect the state of their own hearts. But can this be supposed to be the case with us, who must never hope to discharge our office with effect, without an intimate acquaintance with the inward man—

without tracing the secret operations of nature and of grace—without closely inspecting the causes of revival, and of decay, in the spiritual life, and detecting the most secret springs and plausible artifices of temptation; in all which we shall be successful, just in proportion to the degree of devout attention we bestow on the movements of our own minds.

Men are ruined in their eternal interests by living as though they were their own, and neglecting to realize the certainty of a future account. But it must surely require no small effort to divert our attention from this truth, who have not only the same interest in it with others, but, in consequence of the care of souls, possess a responsibility of a distinct and awful character; since not one of those to whom that care extends, can fall short of salvation through our neglect or default, but *his blood will be required at our hands.* Where, in short, can we turn our eyes, without meeting with incentives to piety? What part of the sacred function can we touch, which will not remind us of the beauty of holiness, the evil of sin, and the emptiness of all sublunary good; or, where shall we not find ourselves in a temple, resounding with awful voices, and filled with holy inspirations?

I feel a pleasing conviction, that, in consequence of deriving from your ministry that spiritual aid it is so adapted to impart, both your piety and usefulness will continue to increase, and by being intimately incorporated, aid and strengthen each other; so that your profiting shall appear unto all men, and while you are watering others, you yourself shall be abundantly watered of God. Thus will you be enabled to adopt the language of the beloved apostle, *That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.* Thus will you possess that unction from which your hearers cannot fail, under the divine blessing, to reap the highest benefit; for while we are exploring the mines of revelation, for the purpose of exhibiting to mankind the *unsearchable riches of Christ;* we are not in the situation of those unhappy men, who

merely toil for the advantage of others, and dare not appropriate to themselves an atom of that precious ore, on which their labour is employed: we are permitted and invited, first to enrich ourselves, and the more we appropriate, the more shall we impart. It is my earnest prayer, my dear brother, *that you may feed the church of the Lord which he has purchased with his own blood; that you may make full proof of your ministry; be instant in season and out of season; teach, exhort, and rebuke, with all long-suffering, and authority.* Then, should you be spared to your flock, you will witness the fruit of your labours in a spiritual plantation, growing under your hand, adorned with *trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified;* and while neglecting worldly considerations, you are intent on the high ends of your calling, inferior satisfactions will not be wanting, but you will meet among the seals of your ministry, with fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers. Or should your career be prematurely cut short, you will have lived long enough to answer the purposes of your being, and to leave a record in the consciences of your hearers, which will not suffer you soon to be forgotten. Though dead, you will still speak; you will speak from the tomb; it may be, in accents more powerful and persuasive, than your living voice could command.*

* Of this we have a striking instance in the premature death of the late Mr. Spencer, of Liverpool. The sensation excited by the sudden removal of that extraordinary young man, accompanied with such affecting circumstances, has not subsided, nor abated, as we are informed, much of its force. The event, which has drawn so great a degree of attention, has been well improved in several excellent discourses on the occasion. The unequalled admiration he excited while living, and the deep and universal concern expressed at his death, demonstrate him to have been no ordinary character; but one of those rare specimens of human nature, which the great Author of it produces at distant intervals, and exhibits for a moment, while he is hastening to *make them up amongst his jewels.* The high hopes entertained of this admirable youth, and the shock, approaching to consternation, occasioned by his death, will, probably, remind the classical reader of the inimitable lines of Virgil on Marcellus.

> O nate, ingentem luctum ne quære tuorum
> Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
> Esse sinent.

The writer of this deeply regrets his never having had an opportunity of witnessing his extraordinary powers; but from all he has heard from the best judges, he can entertain no doubt, that his talents in the pulpit were unrivalled, and that, had his life been spared, he would, in all probability, have carried the art of preaching, if it may be so styled, to a greater perfection than it ever attained, at least, in this kingdom. His eloquence appears to have been of the purest stamp, effective, not ostentatious, consisting less in the striking preponderance of any one quality, requisite to form a public speaker, than in an exquisite combination of them all; whence resulted an extraordinary power of impression, which was greatly aided by a natural and majestic elocution. To these eminent endowments, he added, from the unanimous testimony of those who knew him best, a humility and modesty, which, while they concealed a great part of his excellencies from himself, rendered them the more engaging and attractive. When we reflect on these circumstances, we need the less wonder at the passionate concern excited by his death. For it may truly be said of him, as of St. Stephen, *that devout men made great lamentation over him.* May the impressions produced by the event never be effaced; and, above all, may it have the effect of engaging such as are embarked in the Christian ministry to *work while it is called to-day.*

AN ADDRESS,

TO

THE REV. EUSTACE CAREY,

JANUARY 19, 1814.

ON HIS DESIGNATION AS A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY TO INDIA.

AN ADDRESS.

As it has been usual, in the designation of a Missionary, after solemnly commending him to God by prayer, to deliver a short address; in compliance with a custom, not perhaps improper, or illaudable, I shall request your attention to a few hints of advice, without attempting a regular charge, which I neither judge myself equal to, nor deem necessary, since on your arrival in India you will receive from your venerable relative, Dr. Carey, instruction more ample and appropriate than it is in my power to communicate.

When the first Missionaries who visited these western parts were sent out, their designation was accompanied with prayer and fasting; whence we may infer that fervent supplication ought to form the distinguishing feature in the exercises appropriated to these occasions.

An effusion of the spirit of prayer on the church of Christ is a surer pledge of success in the establishment of Missions, than the most splendid exhibitions of talent. As there is no engagement more entirely spiritual in its nature, nor whose success is more immediately dependent on God than that on which you are entering; to none is that spiritual aid more indispensably necessary, which is chiefly awarded to the prayers of the faithful.

Separate to me, said the Holy Ghost to the disciples assembled at Antioch, *separate to me Barnabas and Saul, to the work whereunto I have called them.* When the omniscient Searcher of hearts separates a christian minister from his brethren, and assigns him a distinct work, it implies the previous perception of certain qualifications for its successful discharge not generally possessed; for though none can give the increase but God, much of his wisdom is to be traced in the selection of instruments fitted to his purpose. The first and most essential qualification for a Missionary is a decided predilection for the office; not the effect of sudden impulse, but of serious,

deep consideration; a predilection strengthened and matured by deliberately counting the cost. Every man has his proper calling; and while the greater part of christian teachers are perfectly satisfied with attempting to do all the good in their power in their native land, there are others of a more enterprising character, inflamed with the holy ambition of carrying the glad tidings beyond the bounds of Christendom; like the great apostle of the Gentiles, who was determined not to build on another man's foundation, but if possible to preach Christ in regions where his name was not known. The circumstances which contribute to such a resolution are various, often too subtle and complicated to admit of a distinct analysis: a constitutional ardour of mind, a natural neglect of difficulties and dangers, an impatience of being confined within the trammels of ordinary duties, together with many accidental associations and impressions, may combine to form a missionary spirit; nor is it so necessary minutely to investigate the causes which have led to a given determination, as the legitimacy of the object, and the purity of the motive.

We adore the prolific Source of all good, in the variety and discrimination of his gifts, by which he imparts a separate character and allots a distinct sphere of operation to the general and essential principles which form the christian and the minister. *He gave some apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*

The sacred impulse to which we have adverted, I am certain you have felt in no common degree, and that it has been your ardent wish to be employed as a messenger to the heathen, from the time you devoted yourself to the ministry. Of your possessing this most essential prerequisite for the office you have undertaken, it is impossible for those who know you to entertain a doubt.

The next qualification of whose necessity I must be allowed to remind you, is singular *self-devotement*, without a degree of which it is not possible to be a christian, still less to any useful purpose a minister, least of all a

missionary. In resolving to quit your native country, and to relinquish your nearest connexions, with little expectation of beholding them again in the flesh, you have given decisive indications of this spirit: nor to a mind like yours, exquisitely alive to the sensibilities of nature and friendship, can the sacrifice you have already made be deemed inconsiderable. But as it is still impossible for you to conjecture the extent of the privations and trials to which, in the pursuit of your object, you may be exposed, your situation is not unlike that of Abraham, who, being commanded to leave his own country, and his father's house, went out not knowing whither he went. As you are entering on an untried scene, where difficulties may arise to exercise your patience and fortitude, of which you can form but a very inadequate conception, you will do well to contemplate the example, and meditate the words of St. Paul, in circumstances not very dissimilar: *And now I go up bound in spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what shall befall me there, save that in every city the Holy Ghost witnesseth that bonds and affliction await me: but none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord to fulfil it.* The love of ease, or the indulgence of secular ambition, would be fatal to the object you are pursuing; nor, in your situation, is there any thing so much to be dreaded as a divided heart, a spirit which hesitates betwixt the calls of duty and the attractions of the world. *To arm yourself with the same mind that was in Christ, who himself suffered, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps*, is a most indispensable part of your duty. In proportion as you feel yourself a stranger upon the earth, eagerly attached to none of its enjoyments or pursuits, prepared without repining to relinquish whatever Providence may demand, and suffer whatever it may inflict; in a word, in proportion to the degree in which you abandon all right in yourself, will you be qualified for the work of an evangelist. Purged from earthly concretions, and worldly passions, you will become *a vessel of honour fitted for the Master's use.* He who is not pos-

sessed of a considerable portion of a self-denying spirit, which was eminently the spirit of him *who pleased not himself*, can engage in no employment more irksome and intolerable than that of a Missionary; for what pleasure can he expect, what advantage can he hope to reap, independent of the consciousness or the hope of doing good? By the nature of your undertaking, all the avenues to secular reputation and emolument are shut against you; on the brilliant illusions with which the children of this world are enchanted, you have closed your eyes, and nothing is left but the severe and sublime satisfaction of following in the steps of those apostles and prophets, who in the midst of the derision of the world, exhausted themselves in a series of efforts to enlighten and to save it. You have chosen, it is true, the better part; but it is a part which you must not hope to sustain but by the perfect subjection and mortification of every rival passion. You must be content to derive your satisfaction from yourself, or rather from your consciousness of the Divine approbation, since you will meet with few disposed to sympathize in your sorrows or rejoice in your success.

The next qualification necessary for a teacher of christianity among heathens, is the *spirit of faith*, by which I intend, not merely that cordial belief of the truth which is essential to a christian, but that unshaken persuasion of the promises of God respecting the triumph and enlargement of his kingdom, which is sufficient to denominate its possessor *strong in faith*. It is impossible that the mind of a Missionary should be too much impressed with the beauty, glory, and grandeur of the kingdom of Christ, as it is unfolded in the oracles of the Old and New Testament; or with the certainty of the final accomplishment of those oracles, founded on the faithfulness and omnipotence of their Author. To those parts of scripture his attention should be especially directed, in which the Holy Ghost employs and exhausts, so to speak, the whole force and splendour of inspiration in depicting the future reign of the Messiah, together with that astonishing spectacle of dignity, purity, and peace which his church will exhibit, when, *having the glory of God*, her

bounds shall be commensurate with those of the habitable globe; when every object on which the eye shall rest, will remind the spectator of the commencement of a new age, in which the tabernacle of God is with men, and he dwells amongst them. His spirit should be imbued with that sweet and tender awe which such anticipations will infallibly produce, whence will spring a generous contempt of the world, and an ardour bordering on impatience to be employed, though in the humblest sphere, as the instrument of accelerating such a period. For compared to this destiny in reserve for the children of men, compared to this glory, invisible at present, and hid behind the clouds which envelope this dark and troubled scene, the brightest day that has hitherto shone upon the world, is midnight, and the highest splendours that have invested it, the shadow of death.

Independent of these assurances, the idea of converting pagan nations to the christian faith must appear chimerical. The attempt to persuade them to relinquish their ancient mode of thinking, corroborated by habit, by example, by interest, and to adopt a new system of opinions and feelings, and enter on a new course of life, will ever be deemed by the worldly-wise, impracticable and visionary. *Pass over the isles of Chittim and see*, said the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, *and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods?* For a nation to *change* their gods, is represented by the highest authority as an event almost unparalleled: and if it be so difficult to induce them to change the *mode* of their idolatry, how much more to persuade them to abandon it altogether! Idolatry is not to be looked upon as a mere speculative error respecting the object of worship, of little or no practical efficacy. Its hold upon the mind of a fallen creature is most tenacious, its operation most extensive. It is a corrupt practical institution, involving a whole system of sentiments and manners which perfectly moulds and transforms its votaries. It modifies human nature, in every aspect under which it can be contemplated, being intimately blended and incorporated

with all its perceptions of good and evil, with all its infirmities, passions, and fears. In a country like India, where it has been established for ages, its ramifications are so extended as to come into contact with every mode, and every incident of life. Scarce a day, or an hour, passes with an Hindoo, in which, by the abstinencies it enjoins, and the ceremonies it prescribes, he is not reminded of his religion. It meets him at every turn, presses like the atmosphere on all sides, and holds him by a thousand invisible chains. By incessantly admonishing him of something which he must do, or something which he must forbear, it becomes the strongest of his active habits; while the multiplicity of objects of worship, distinguished by an infinite variety in their character and exploits, is sufficient to fill the whole sphere of his imagination. In the indolent repose which his constitution and climate incline him to indulge, he suffers his fancy to wander, without limit, amidst scenes of voluptuous enjoyment, or objects of terror and dismay; while, revolving the history of his gods, he conceives himself absorbed in holy contemplations. There is not a vicious passion he can be disposed to cherish, not a crime he can be tempted to commit, for which he may not find a sanction and an example in the legends of his gods. Though the system of polytheism established in India, considered in an argumentative light, is beneath contempt, being destitute of the least shadow of proof, as well as of all coherence in its principles; yet, viewed as an instrument of establishing a despotic empire over the mind, nothing, it must be acknowledged, was ever more artfully contrived; not to mention the distinction of castes which is obviously adapted to fix and perpetuate every other institution. That the true religion should degenerate into idolatry is easily to be accounted for from the known principles of human nature, because such deterioration is aided by its corruption, flatters its strongest propensities, and artfully adapts itself to whatever is feeble, sensitive, and voluptuous in the character of the species.

.... Facilis descensus Averni.

As it is easy to descend from an elevation which it is difficult to climb, to fall from the adoration of the Supreme Being to the worship of idols, demands no effort. Idolatry is strongly intrenched in the corruptions, and fortified by the weakness, of human nature. Hence we find all nations have sunk into it in succession, frequently in opposition to the strongest remonstrances of inspired prophets; while we have no example in the history of the world, of a single city, family, or individual, who has renounced it through the mere operation of unassisted reason: such is the fatal propensity of mankind to that enormity. It is the veil of the covering, cast over all flesh, which nothing but the effulgence of Revelation has pierced. The true religion satisfies and enlarges the reason, but militates against the inclinations of men. Resting on a few sublime truths, addressed to the understanding and conscience, affording few distinct images to the fancy, and no indulgence to the passions, it can only be planted and preserved by a continual efflux from its Divine Author, of whose spirituality and elevation it so largely partakes.

But however difficult it may be to prevail upon men to relinquish the practice of idolatry, the accomplishment of this is not the whole, perhaps not the most arduous part of your work, since you are too well acquainted with the genius of Christianity to permit yourself to rest satisfied with any external profession, which is destitute of the fruits of the Spirit. The change you wish to realize, and which you will alone contemplate with satisfaction, is the effectual conversion of the soul from sin to holiness, and from the world to God; and how much the necessity of this increases the difficulty of propagating the gospel among heathens with success, is so obvious that I need not insist upon it at large. The valley of vision in Ezekiel, filled with bones which are very dry, is no exaggerated picture of the state of the heathen world; and what less than an Almighty power can clothe them with sinews, cover them with flesh and breathe into them the breath of life?

Hence the absolute necessity of a vigorous faith in the

promises of God, respecting the future renovation of mankind, which will support you amidst the greatest discouragements, prompt you to hope against hope, and inspire you with unshaken perseverance and resolution; besides that, on account of the glory it gives to God, it imparts by divine appointment to its possessor, an interest in his all-sufficiency and power. It is a mysterious link in the chain of moral causes and effects which connects the weakness of the creature with the almightiness of God. *Be it unto thee*, said our Lord on a certain occasion, *be it unto thee according to thy faith.* Faith, considered as a mere speculative assent to the truth of a divine testimony, may be looked upon as uniform or stationary; but when we consider it as a practical principle, as one of the graces of the Spirit, we perceive it to be, in common with others, susceptible of continual enlargement and increase. In the degree of power which future and invisible realities exert over the mind, in the practical energy of what men profess to believe, in the promptitude and certainty with which it determines them to a correspondent conduct, there is the utmost diversity even among those who believe with the heart. The faith to which the Scriptures attach such momentous consequences, and ascribe such glorious exploits, is a practical habit, which, like every other, is strengthened and increased by continual exercise. It is nourished by meditation, by prayer, and the devout perusal of the Scriptures; and the light which it diffuses becomes stronger and clearer by an unintercepted converse with its object, and a faithful compliance with its dictates; as on the contrary it is weakened and obscured by whatever wounds the conscience, or impairs the purity and spirituality of the mind. This is the shield which will cover you from every assault; the chief part of that defensive armour which it behoves you to put on. Reposing on the word of Him with whom all things are possible, of Him who cannot lie; in the formidable bulwarks of idolatry, in the invincible rampart of prejudice and superstition, which the great adversary of mankind has cast up to obstruct the progress of truth, you will see nothing

to appal you: you will feel the battle not to be yours, but the Lord's, who, determined to subdue his enemies under his feet, condescends to employ you as an humble instrument of his victories; and instead of sinking under the consciousness of weakness, you will glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you.

Allow me to remind you of the absolute necessity of cultivating a mild, conciliating, affectionate temper, in the discharge of your office. If an uninterested spectator, after a careful perusal of the New Testament, were asked what he conceived to be its distinguishing characteristic, he would reply, without hesitation, that wonderful spirit of philanthropy by which it is distinguished. It is a perpetual commentary on that sublime aphorism, *God is love.* As the christian religion is an exhibition of the incomprehensible mercy of God to a guilty race, so it is dispensed in a manner perfectly congenial with its nature; and the book which contains it is replete with such unaffected strokes of tenderness and goodness, as are to be found in no other volume. The benign spirit of the gospel infused itself into the breast of its first Missionaries. In St. Paul for example, we behold the most heroic resolution, the most lofty superiority to all the modes of intimidation and danger, a spirit which rose with its difficulties, and exulted in the midst of the most dismaying objects; yet when we look more narrowly into his character, and investigate his motives, we perceive it was his attachment to mankind that inspired him with this intrepidity, and urged him to conflicts more painful and arduous than the votaries of glory have ever sustained. Who would have supposed it possible for the same breast to be the seat of so much energy and so much softness? that he who changed the face of the world by his preaching, and while a prisoner made his judge tremble on the tribunal, could stoop to embrace a fugitive slave, and to employ the most exquisite address to effect his reconciliation with his master? The conversion of Onesimus afforded him a joy *like the joy of harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.* When the spiritual interests of mankind were concerned,

no difficulties so formidable as to shake his resolution, no details so insignificant as to escape his notice. To the utmost inflexibility of principle, he joined the gentlest condescension to human infirmity, *becoming all things to all men, that he might win some: to the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain the Jews, to them that were without law, as without law*, adapting on all occasions his modes of address to the character and disposition of those with whom he conversed. It was the love of Christ and of souls that produced and harmonized those apparent discordances.

Such is the example you must propose for your imitation, if you would realize to any considerable extent the object of your mission to the heathen. By a mild and unassuming deportment, by an attention to their worldly, as well as to their spiritual, interests; by adopting, as far as you have ability, whatever may contribute to their happiness and improvement, convince them that you are the friend of man. When you have established yourself in their affections, you have gained an important point; you have possessed yourself of a signal advantage for the successful prosecution of your work.

Your business is to persuade men, and how can you expect to succeed unless you conciliate their regard? which is more necessary on account of the seeming severity which attaches to some part of the doctrine of Christ. Were you permitted to inculcate a self-pleasing doctrine, the want of suavity and gentleness of manner might easily be dispensed with; the laxity of the precept would compensate for the austerity of the teacher. But when you are called on to insist on the state of man as a fallen and guilty creature, to enforce the necessity of self-denial, to impose the most powerful restraints on the indulgence of criminal passions; when you must denounce the wrath of God against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, great mildness and affection are requisite to prevent such representations from exciting disgust. What is awful and alarming in christianity, should be softened and tempered by a persuasive tenderness of address. Let it be your care to divest religion of what-

ever is unlovely and repulsive, that it may appear not only pure, but gentle; not only majestic but amiable; equally favourable to the enjoyment and the communication of happiness. But I have dwelt longer on this head than was necessary, when I recollect that the person I am addressing is distinguished by a temper which will render the mild condescensions I am recommending not more his duty than his delight.

The affectionate and conciliatory disposition we have been enforcing must be combined with prudence, and the diligent study of human nature, which you will find absolutely necessary to conduct you through intricate and unbeaten paths. St. Paul frequently reminds the Thessalonians of the *manner of his entrance* amongst them. In the first introduction of the gospel amongst a people, it is of great importance that every step be well weighed, that nothing be done which is rash, offensive, or indecorous; but every precaution employed, consistent with godly simplicity, to disarm prejudice, and conciliate respect: nor is there any thing in the conduct of the first ministers of the gospel more to be admired than the exquisite propriety with which they conducted themselves in the most delicate situations. Their zeal was exempt from indecorum, their caution from timidity or art. In the commencement of every great and hazardous undertaking, the first measures are usually decisive, at least in those instances in which success is dependent, under God, on the voluntary co-operation of mankind. A single act of imprudence is sufficient to blast the undertaking of a Missionary, which in the situation of an ordinary minister, would scarcely be felt. The best method of securing yourself from errors in this quarter, is to endeavour to acquire as large a measure as possible of the graces of the Spirit, to be deeply imbued with the wisdom which is from above. Nothing subtle or refined should enter into the views of a christian Missionary. Let him be continually elevating his principles, and purifying his motives; let him be clothed with humility, and actuated on all occasions with love to God and the souls of men, and his character cannot fail of being marked

with a propriety and beauty which will ultimately command universal esteem. These were the only arts which a Schwartz in the east, and a Brainerd in the west, condescended to cultivate.

It must be remembered, however, that the functions of a Missionary connect him more with mankind than ordinary ministers, and less admit of an entire abstraction from the world; on which account he will sometimes be exposed to difficulties from which nothing can extricate him but a considerable acquaintance with men and things. He will probably be called to transact affairs of considerable moment with persons of superior stations, with men of dissimilar characters and habits, of different nations and religions, who possess nothing in common but the epidemic selfishness of human nature; in an intercourse with whom, he will need the wisdom of the serpent, combined with the innocence of the dove. The prudence, however, which it is desirable a missionary should possess, is not a timid, calculating policy; it is manly and heroic, operating with promptitude and vigour on an extensive fund of knowledge acquired by habits of acute and vigilant observation. Of many functions of life it is possible to foresee the duties they comprise, and to ascertain beforehand the extent of their demand on our time and talents. In the office of a Missionary it is impossible. His engagements must be in a great degree fortuitous, arising out of circumstances which he could neither foresee nor control; and hence, unless he possess a prompt and enlightened judgement, he will often feel himself embarrassed and perplexed.

There is much in the situation of a Missionary calculated to keep him awake and attentive to his duties. To a stated pastor, it is confessed, there are not wanting powerful motives to diligence and exertion, at the same time that it is equally obvious there are considerable temptations to indolence and formality. Since the services he is engaged to perform admit of little variety, and are easily reducible to a system, they are in no small danger of being performed rather from the mechanism of

habit than the impulse of feeling; and much ardour of mind is requisite to infuse freshness and novelty into a series of operations so uniform. In the performance of duties which proceed in a settled routine, it is equally difficult to feel and to impart an interest. With the Missionary it is quite the reverse. Incapable, as he is, of forming a conception of the situation in which he may be placed, or of the difficulties with which he may be surrounded, he must be conscious his undertaking involves a character of enterprise and hazard. He is required to explore new paths, and, leaving the footsteps of the flock, to go in quest of the lost sheep, on whatever mountain it may have wandered, or in whatever valley it may be hid. He must be prepared to encounter prejudice and error in strange and unwonted shapes, to trace the aberrations of reason, and the deviations from rectitude, through all the diversified mazes of superstition and idolatry. He is engaged in a series of offensive operations; he is in the field of battle, wielding *weapons which are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down the strong holds of Satan.* When not in action, he is yet encamped in an enemy's country, where nothing can secure his acquisitions, or preserve him from surprise, but incessant vigilance. The voluntary exile from his native country to which he submits, is sufficient to remind him continually of his important embassy, and to induce a solicitude that so many sacrifices may not be made, so many privations undergone in vain. He holds the lamp of instruction to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; and while there remains a particle of ignorance not expelled, a single prejudice not vanquished, a sinful or idolatrous custom not relinquished, his task is left unfinished. It is not enough for him, on a stated day, to address an audience on the concerns of eternity: he must teach from house to house, and be instant in season and out of season, embracing every opportunity which offers of inculcating the principles of a new religion, as well as of *confirming the souls of his disciples.* He must consider himself as the mouth, and interpreter of that wisdom, *which crieth without, which*

uttereth her voice in the streets, which crieth in the chief places of concourse.

Under these impressions, you will peruse the Acts of the Apostles, which record the methods by which the gospel was first propagated, with deep attention, where you will trace precedents the most instructive, as well as difficulties surmounted and trials endured, exactly similar to your own; nor will you fail to feel a sympathy of spirit with those holy men in their labours and sufferings, which other ministers can but very imperfectly possess. Encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, you will esteem it no inconsiderable honour to share in the same combat, encounter the same enemies, and accomplish the share allotted you of those sufferings which remain to Christ's mystical body. I scarcely need recommend to your attention the letters of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, where the office of an evangelist (for such you must consider yourself) is delineated with such precision and fidelity. While you peruse his inspired directions, you are entitled to consider yourself as addressed, inasmuch as the Spirit under whose direction they were written, unquestionably intended them for the instruction of all who are in similar circumstances.

In directing your view to apostolical precedents, attend not so much to their *letter* as to their *spirit:* investigate carefully the circumstances in which they were placed; compare them with your own with respect to the particulars in which they coincide, and in which they differ, that you may follow them, not as a servile copyist, but as a judicious and enlightened imitator.

Be *strong* in the grace that is in the Lord Jesus. Among the nations which will be the scene of your future labours, you will witness a state of things essentially different from that which prevails here, where the name of Christ is held in reverence, the principal doctrines of his religion speculatively acknowledged, and the institutes of worship widely extended and diffused. The leaven of christian piety has spread itself in innumerable directions, modified public opinion, improved the state of society, and given birth to many admirable

institutions unknown to pagan countries. The authority of the Saviour is recognised, his injunctions in some instances obeyed, and the outrages of impiety restrained by law, by custom, and above all, by the silent counteraction of piety in its sincere professors. Hence, in combating the vices and irreligion of the age, so many principles are conceded, and so much ground already won from the adversary, that little remains but to urge him with the legitimate consequences of his own opinions, and to rouse the dormant energies of conscience by the exhibition of acknowledged truth. Ministers of the gospel in this quarter of the globe resemble the commanders of an army stationed in a conquered country, whose inhabitants, overawed and subdued, yield a partial obedience; they have sufficient employment in attempting to conciliate the affections of the natives, and in carrying into execution the orders and regulations of their Prince ; since there is much latent disaffection, though no open rebellion, a strong partiality to their former rulers, with few attempts to erect the standard of revolt.

In India, Satan maintains an almost undisputed empire, and the powers of darkness, secure of their dominion, riot and revel at their pleasure, sporting themselves with the misery of their vassals, whom they incessantly agitate with delusive hopes and fantastic terrors, leading them captive at their will, while few efforts have been made to despoil them of their usurped authority. Partial invasions have been attempted, and a few captives disenthralled; but the strength and sinews of empire remain entire, and that dense and palpable darkness which invests it has scarcely felt the impression of a few feeble and scattered rays. In India you will witness the predominance of a system which provides for the worship of gods many, and lords many, while it excludes the adoration of the Supreme Being, legitimates cruelty, polygamy, and lust, debases the standard of morals, oppresses with ceremonies those whom it deprives of instruction, and suggests no solid hopes of happiness beyond the grave.

You will witness with indignation that monstrous alliance betwixt impurity and devotion, obscenity and religion, which characterises the popular idolatry of all nations, and which, in opposition to the palliating sophistry of infidels, sufficiently evinces it to be what the Scriptures assert—the worship of devils, not of God.

When we consider that moral causes operate on free agents, we shall not be surprised to find their effects are less uniform than those which result from the action of material and physical powers, and that human minds are susceptible of opposite impressions from the same objects.

On such as have neither been established in the evidences, nor felt the efficacy of revealed religion, a residence in a pagan country has usually a most pernicious effect, and matures latent irreligion into open impiety. The absence of christian institutions and christian examples leaves them at liberty to gratify their sensual inclinations without control, and the familiar contemplation of pagan manners and customs gradually wears out every trace and vestige of the religion in which they were educated, and imboldens them to consider it in the light of a local superstition. They are no further converts to the brahminical faith than to prefer it to their own; that is, they prefer the religion they can despise with impunity, to one that afflicts their consciences, that which leaves them free, to that which restrains them. As the secret language of their heart had always been, *cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from amongst us*, in the absence of God, of his institutes and his worship, they find a congenial element, nor are they at all displeased at perceiving the void filled with innumerable fantastic shapes and chimeras; for they contemplate religion with great composure, providing it be sufficiently ridiculous.

You, I am persuaded, will view the condition of millions who are involved in the shades of idolatry, originally formed in the image of God, now totally estranged from their great Parent, and reposing their trust on things which cannot profit, with different emotions, and will be anxious to recall them to the Bishop and Shep-

herd of their souls. Instead of considering the most detestable species of idolatry as so many different modes of worshipping the One Supreme, agreeable to the jargon of infidels, you will not hesitate to regard them as an impious attempt to share his incommunicable honours; as composing that image of jealousy which he is engaged to smite, confound, and destroy. When you compare the incoherence, extravagance, and absurdity which pervade the systems of polytheism, with the simple and sublime truths of the gospel, the result will be an increased attachment to that mystery of godliness. When you observe the anxiety of the Hindoo devotee to obtain the pardon of sin, and the incredible labours and sufferings which he cheerfully undergoes to quiet the perturbations of conscience, the doctrine of the cross will rise, if possible, still higher in your esteem, and you will long for an opportunity of crying in his ears, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.* When you witness the immolation of females on the funeral pile of their husbands, and the barbarous treatment of aged parents, left by their children to perish on the banks of the Ganges, you will recognise the footsteps of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and will be impatient to communicate the mild and benevolent maxims of the gospel. When you behold an immense population held in chains by that detestable institution the *caste*, as well as bowed down under an intolerable weight of brahminical superstitions, you will long to impart the liberty which Christ confers, *where there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*

The cultivation of a wilderness, however, requires a more robust and vigorous industry than is necessary to preserve in a good condition the ground which is already reclaimed. The noxious produce of a long tract of time must be extirpated, the stubborn and intractable soil broken up, marshes drained, irregularities levelled, and much persevering labour employed, ere the ordinary operations of agriculture can commence, or the seed be cast into the earth. In attempting to evangelize the inhabitants of pagan countries, you must expect to

encounter peculiar difficulties; you will meet in the natives with the ignorance and mental imbecility of children, without the candour, simplicity, and freedom from prejudice which are among the charms of that tender age. To efface erroneous impressions, to eradicate false principles, and reduce them even to a natural state, defective and corrupt as that state is, will be no inconsiderable task, since there is not only an immense void to be filled, and great deficiencies to be supplied, but principles and prejudices to contend with, capable of the most active resistance.

In recommending the principles of christianity to a pagan nation, I would by no means advise the adoption of a refined and circuitous course of instruction, commencing with an argumentative exposition of the principles of natural religion, and from thence advancing to the peculiar doctrines of revelation; nor would I advise you to devote much time to an elaborate confutation of the Hindoo or Mahometan systems. The former of these methods would be far too subtle and intricate for popular use; the latter calculated to irritate. Great practical effects on the populace are never produced by profound argumentation; and every thing which tends to irritation and disgust should be carefully avoided. Let your instruction be in the form of a *testimony:* let it, with respect to the mode of exhibiting it, though not to the spirit of the teacher, be *dogmatic.* *Testify* repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It might become a Socrates, who was left to the light of nature, to express himself with diffidence, and to affirm that he had spared no pains in acting up to the character of a philosopher, in other words, a diligent inquirer after truth: but whether he had philosophized aright, or attained the object of his inquiries, he knew not, but left it to be ascertained in that world on which he was entering. In him, such indications of modest distrust were graceful and affecting: but would little become the disciple of revelation, or the christian minister, who is entitled to say with St. John, *we* know *that the whole world lieth in wickedness, and that the Son*

of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.

After reminding them of their state as guilty and polluted creatures, which the ceremonies of their religion teach them to confess, exhibit to the inhabitants of Hindostan the cross of Christ as their only refuge. Acquaint them with his incarnation, his character as the Son of God and the Son of man, his offices, and the design of his appearance; not with the air of a disputer of this world, but of him who is conscious to himself of his possessing the medicine of life, the treasure of immortality, which he is anxious to impart to guilty men. Insist fearlessly on the futility and vanity of all human methods of expiation, on the impotence of idols, and the command of God to *all men every where to repent, inasmuch as he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.* Display the sufferings of Christ like one who was an eye witness of those sufferings, and hold up the blood, the precious blood of atonement, as issuing warm from the cross. It is a peculiar excellence of the gospel, that in its wonderful adaptation to the state and condition of mankind, as fallen creatures, it bears intrinsic marks of its divinity, and is supported not less by internal than by external evidence. By a powerful appeal to the conscience, by a faithful delineation of man in his grandeur, and in his weakness, in his original capacity for happiness, and his present misery and guilt, present this branch of its evidence in all its force. Seize on every occasion those features of christianity which render it interesting; and by awakening the fears, and exciting the hopes, of your hearers, endeavour to annihilate every other object, and make it appear, what it really is, the pearl of great price, the sovereign balm, the cure of every ill, the antidote of death, the precursor of immortality. In such a ministry, fear not to give loose to all the ardour of your soul, to call into action every emotion and every faculty which can exalt or adorn it. You will find ample scope for all its force and tenderness; and should you be

called to pour your life as a libation on the offering of the Gentiles, you will only have the more occasion to exult and rejoice.

In order to qualify yourself for the performance of these duties, it is above all things necessary for you to acquaint yourself with the general doctrines of christianity in their full extent; but it will be neither necessary nor expedient to initiate your converts into those controversies which, through a long course of time, have grown up amongst christians. Endeavour to acquire as extensive and perfect a knowledge as possible of the dictates of inspiration, and by establishing your hearers in these, preclude the entrance of error, rather than confute it. Be always prepared to answer every modest inquiry into the grounds of your faith and practice; and that you may be more capable of entering into their difficulties, and anticipating their objections, place yourself as much as possible in the situation of those whom you are called to instruct. When we consider the permanent consequences likely to result from first impressions on the minds of pagans, the few advantages they possess for religious discussion, and the extreme confidence they are likely to repose in their spiritual guides, you must be conscious how important it is to *plant wholly a right seed.* Your defective representations of truth will not soon be supplied, nor the errors you plant extirpated, since we find societies of christians in these parts of the world, where discussion and controversy abound, retain from generation to generation the distinguishing tenets of their leaders. In forming the plan, and laying the foundation of an edifice which it is proposed shall last for ever, it is desirable that no materials should be admitted but such as are solid and durable, and no ornaments introduced but such as are chaste and noble. As it would be too much to expect you should perfectly succeed in imparting the mind of Christ, might I be permitted to advise, you will lean rather to the side of *defect* than *excess*, and in points of inferior magnitude omit what is true, rather than inculcate what

is doubtful, since the influence of religion on the heart depends not on the multiplicity, but on the quality of its objects.

The unnecessary multiplication of articles of faith gives a character of littleness to christianity, and tends in no small degree to impress a similar character on its professors. The grandeur and efficacy of the gospel results not from an immense accumulation of little things, but from its powerful exhibition of a few great ones. If you are determined to initiate your hearers into the subtleties and disputes which have prevailed in the Western world, I would recommend you, in imitation of the church of Rome, to dispense with the New Testament as the basis of instruction, and to betake yourself to the writings of the schoolmen; for that divine volume, rightly interpreted, supplies no aliment to a disputatious humour, which has never ceased, since it was first introduced, to be the scoff of infidels, and the plague of the church.

Among the indirect benefits which may be expected to arise from missions, we may be allowed to anticipate a more pure, simple, apostolical mode of presenting the gospel, which it may be doubted whether any of the various denominations, under which the followers of Christ have been classed, have exhibited precisely as he and his apostles taught it. In consequence of the collision of disputes, and the hostile aspect which rival sects bear to each other, they are scarcely in a situation to investigate truth with perfect impartiality. Few or none of them have derived their sentiments purely from the sacred oracles, as the result of independent inquiry; but almost universally from some distinguished leader, who at the commencement of the Reformation formed his faith, and planned his discipline, amidst the heat and fury of theological combat. Terms have been invented for the purpose of excluding error, or more accurately defining the truth, to which the New Testament is a stranger, and on those terms associations and impressions ingrafted, which in some instances, perhaps, little correspond with the divine simplicity of the gospel. It is far from my intention to insinuate that serious and fundamental

errors may justly be imputed to the classes of christians to whom I refer; I am fully convinced of the contrary:—but it may be worth while to inquire whether we have not all in our turn receded somewhat from the standard, if not by the adoption of positive error, yet by a disproportionate attention to some parts of revelation, to the neglect of others equally important, in consequence of an undue partiality to our respective peculiarities.

The situation of a Missionary retired from the scene of debate and controversy, who has continually before his eyes the objects which presented themselves to the attention of the apostles, is favourable to an emancipation from prejudice of every sort, and to the acquisition of just and enlarged conceptions of christianity. It will be your lot to walk the same wards in this great hospital, and to prescribe to the same class of patients that first experienced the salutary and renovating power of the gospel. The gods which are worshipped at this time in India are supposed by Sir William Jones to be the very same, under different names, with those who shared the adoration of Italy and Greece when the gospel was first published in those regions; so that you will be an eye-witness of the very evils and enormities which then prevailed in the Western hemisphere, and which the sword of the Spirit so effectually subdued. You will be under great advantages for ascending to first principles, for tracing the stream to its head and spring, by having incessantly to contemplate the state of things in a moral view, of which every page of scripture assumes the existence, but of which the inhabitants of Europe have no living experience. It is with great satisfaction accordingly I have observed the harmony of doctrine, the identity of instruction, which has pervaded the ministry of protestant missionaries, who have been employed under the auspices of different denominations of christians.

If to survey mankind in different situations, and under the influence of opposite institutions, civil and religious, tends to elevate the mind above vulgar prejudice, by none is this advantage more eminently possessed than by christian missionaries. In addition to the advantages usually

anticipated from foreign travel, their attention is directly turned to man in the most interesting light in which he can be viewed. An intelligent missionary, in consequence of daily conversing with the natives on the most momentous subjects, and at the most affecting moments, has opportunities of becoming acquainted, not merely with the surface of manners, but with the interior of the character, which can rarely fall to the lot of any other person ; besides, that christianity, it may be justly affirmed, is the best decipherer of the human heart, and is that alone which can solve its contradictions and explain its anomalies. Hence it may be fairly expected, nor will the expectation disappoint us, that an experienced Missionary, possessed of the talent and habit of observation, will, in every country, deserve to be classed amongst the most enlightened of its inhabitants.

Few things more powerfully tend to enlarge the mind than conversing with great objects, and engaging in great pursuits. That the object you are pursuing is entitled to that appellation, will not be questioned by him who reflects on the infinite advantages derived from christianity, to every nation and clime where it has prevailed in its purity, and that the prodigious superiority which Europe possesses over Asia and Africa, is chiefly to be ascribed to this cause. It is the possession of religion which comprehends the seeds of endless improvement, which maintains an incessant struggle with whatever is barbarous, selfish, or inhuman, which, by unveiling futurity, clothes morality with the sanction of a divine law, and harmonizes utility and virtue in every combination of events, and in every stage of existence ; a religion which, by affording the most just and sublime conceptions of the Deity, and of the moral relations of man, has given birth at once to the loftiest speculation, and the most child-like humanity, uniting the inhabitants of the globe into one family, and in the bonds of a common salvation ; it is this religion which, rising upon us like a finer sun, has quickened moral vegetation, and replenished Europe with talents, virtues, and exploits, which, in spite of its physical disadvantages, have rendered it a

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paradise, the delight and wonder of the world. An attempt to propagate this religion among the natives of Hindostan, may perhaps be stigmatized as visionary and romantic; but to enter the lists of controversy with those who would deny it to be great and noble, would be a degradation to reason.*

On these principles the cause of missions has recently been sustained in parliament, and the propriety and expedience of attempting the propagation of christianity in India, demonstrated by arguments and considerations suited to the meridian of such assemblies. We feel ourselves highly indebted to those distinguished senators who exerted their eloquence on that occasion, and have no hesitation in asserting that a more wise and magnanimous measure was never adopted by an enlightened legislature, than that of facilitating the communication of

* It is impossible to read the strictures of the Edinburgh Review on Missions, in an article which appeared under that title, without surprise and indignation, that such sentiments could find admission in a work which possesses such just claims to literary merit. The anonymous writer of the article alluded to, with the levity of a buffoon, joined to a heart of iron, and a face of brass, has more than insinuated that the christianity attempted to be promoted in India by the Missionaries at Serampore, would, were it adopted, prove a serious injury to the natives, and that they are much happier and more virtuous under their present institutions. The system of religion, be it remembered, which these men have attempted to introduce, and which this *christian* reviewer loads with abuse, is precisely the same in its doctrinal articles with that of the Church of England, to which he has subscribed, *ex animo* no doubt, his unfeigned assent and consent. It may be hoped, that at a time when the Church of England is evincing a spirit of moderation and forbearance, and can boast of so many prelates and dignitaries, distinguished for their piety and learning, no clergyman for the future will be allowed to degrade himself in a similar manner, without the most indignant rebuke. It may possibly gratify certain spirits to see the dissenters and methodists vilified and abused; but they will do well to remember, that the indulgence of a profane and scoffing humour must be ultimately injurious, not only to christianity, but to any christian community whatever; and that to stab religion through the sides of fanaticism, is a stale artifice of infidels, by which the simplest can no longer be deceived. I sincerely hope the conductors of the Edinburgh Review have long been ashamed of the article in question. When I compare the intellectual power displayed in some articles of that publication with the extreme ignorance of religion evinced in others, I know not how better to characterise it than in the language of Virgil, speaking of Polyphemus,—

"Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, *cui lumen ademptum*."

christian knowledge to the subjects of our Eastern empire. As a political measure, nothing more unexceptionable or beneficial can be conceived. It is not in this light, however, we would wish you to regard your present undertaking. What may satisfy the views of a statesman, ought not to satisfy a christian minister. It is the business of the former to project for this world; of the latter, for eternity. The former proposes to improve the advantages, and to mitigate the evils of life; the latter, the conquest of death, and the achievement of immortality. They proceed in the same direction, it is true, as far as they go; but the one proceeds infinitely further than the other.

In the views of the most enlightened statesmen, compared to those of a christian minister, there is a littleness and limitation, which is not to be imputed in one case as a moral imperfection, nor in the other as a personal merit; the difference arising purely from the disparity in the subjects upon which they respectively speculate. Should you be asked on your arrival in India, as it is very probable you will, what there is in christianity which renders it so inestimable in your eyes, that you judged it fit to undertake so long, dangerous, and expensive a voyage, for the purpose of imparting it,—you will answer without hesitation, it is the power of God to salvation; nor will any view of it short of this, or the inculcation of it for any inferior purpose, enable it to produce even those moralizing and civilizing effects it is so powerfully adapted to accomplish. Christianity will civilize, it is true, but it is only when it is allowed to develope the energies by which it sanctifies. Christianity will inconceivably ameliorate the present condition of being,—who doubts it? Its universal prevalence, not in the name but in reality, will convert this world into a semi-paradisaical state; but it is only while it is permitted to prepare its inhabitants for a better. Let her be urged to forget her celestial origin and destiny, to forget that *she came from God, and returns to God;* and whether she is employed by the artful and enterprising, as the instrument of establishing a spiritual empire and dominion

over mankind, or by the philanthropist, as the means of promoting their civilization and improvement, she resents the foul indignity, claps her wings, and takes her flight, leaving nothing but a base and sanctimonious hypocrisy in her room.

Preach it then, my dear brother, with a constant recollection that such is its character and aim. Preach it with a perpetual view to eternity, and with the simplicity and affection with which you would address your dearest friends, were they assembled round your dying bed. While others are ambitious to form the citizen of earth, be it yours to train him for heaven; to raise up the temple of God from among the ancient desolations; to contribute your part towards the formation and perfection of that eternal society, which will flourish in inviolable purity and order, when all human associations shall be dissolved, and the princes of this world shall come to nought. In the pursuit of these objects, let it be your ambition to tread in the footsteps of a Brainerd and a Schwartz; I may add, of your excellent relative, with whom we are happy in perceiving you to possess a congeniality of character, not less than an affinity of blood.

But should you succeed beyond your utmost hope, expect not to escape the ridicule of the ungodly, or the censure of the world: but be content to sustain that sort of reputation, and run that sort of career, invariably allotted to the christian Missionary; where, agreeable to the experience of St. Paul, obscurity and notoriety, admiration and scorn, sorrows and consolations, attachments the most tender and opposition the most violent, are interchangeably mingled.

But whatever be the sentiments of the world, respecting which you will indulge no excessive solicitude, your name will be precious in India, your memory dear to multitudes, who will reverence in you the instrument of their eternal salvation; and how much more satisfaction will accrue from the consciousness of this, than from the loudest human applause, your own reflections will determine. At that awful moment when you are called to bid a final adieu to the world, and to look into eternity;

when the hopes, fears, and agitations which sublunary objects shall have occasioned, will subside like a feverish dream, or a vision of the night, the certainty of belonging to the number of the saved will be the only consolation; and when to this is joined the conviction of having contributed to enlarge that number, your joy will be full. You will be conscious of having conferred a benefit on your fellow-creatures, you know not precisely what, but of such a nature that it will require all the illumination of eternity to measure its dimensions, and ascertain its value. Having followed Christ in the *regeneration*, in the preparatory labours accompanying the renovation of mankind, you will rise to an elevated station in a world where the scantiest portion is a *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, and a conspicuous place will be assigned you in that unchanging firmament, where those who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

But it is time I should close this address, which has already been extended much further than was at first designed. On the necessity of maintaining an exemplary purity of conduct, little or nothing has been said, because such is our confidence in your character, that we deemed admonition of this kind superfluous. As you are, however, still in the body, and will be exposed to numerous temptations, you will feel the propriety of being jealous over yourself with a godly jealousy, and exerting a continual care and vigilance, lest, in the awful language of the apostle, *after preaching to others, you yourself should be a cast-away.* I need not remind you that the society under whose auspices you are proceeding to India, have on no occasion employed a Missionary in whom they reposed more confidence, or of whom they formed more raised expectations; if you should become vain, worldly, sensual, indolent, and consequently useless, ours will not be an ordinary disappointment; we shall have fallen from a great hope. You will be sensible of the indispensable necessity of not interfering with the politics of India, nor of giving the smallest ground of umbrage and distrust to the constituted authorities, to whom it will be your duty

not less than your interest to pay on all occasions, in return for the protection they will yield, the most respectful deference.

Let me also recommend you to listen to the advice, and be guided by the suggestions, as far as your conscience will permit, of your fathers in the mission, and of Dr. Carey in particular, whose wisdom and experience, to say nothing of his relationship to you, entitle him to reverential attention. You are now about to be removed from us, who it is probable shall see your face no more; but you will not be removed from the communion of saints, which no seas can divide, no distance impair, in which we shall often meet at a throne of grace, whence fervent prayers will ascend to the Father of mercies, that he may keep you under his holy protection, and cause the richest of his blessings to descend *on the head of him who was separate from his brethren.*

ARTICLES

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THE ECLECTIC REVIEW.

REVIEW

OF

FOSTER'S ESSAYS

Essays, in a Series of Letters, on the following Subjects:—On a Man's writing Memoirs of himself; On Decision of Character; On the application of the Epithet Romantic: On some of the Causes by which Evangelical Religion has been rendered less acceptable to Persons of cultivated Taste. By JOHN FOSTER. 2 vols. 12mo. 1805. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. 458. Seventh Edition, 1823.

THE authors who have written on human nature may be properly distinguished into two classes, the metaphysical and the popular. The former contemplate man in the abstract; and, neglecting the different shades of character and peculiarities of temper by which mankind are diversified, confine their attention to those fundamental principles which pervade the whole species. In attempting to explore the secrets of mental organization, they assume nothing more for a basis than a mere susceptibility of impression, whence they labour to deduce the multiplied powers of the human mind. The light in which they choose to consider man in their researches, is not that of a being possessed already of the exercise of reason, and agitated by various sentiments and passions, but simply as capable of acquiring them; and their object is, by an accurate investigation of the laws which regulate the connexion of the mind with the external universe, to discover in what manner they are actually acquired. They endeavour to trace back every mental appearance to its source. Considering the powers and principles of the mind as a complicated piece of machinery, they attempt to discover the *primum mobile*, or in other words,

that primary law, that ultimate fact, which is sufficiently comprehensive to account for every other movement. This attention to the internal operations of the mind, with a view to analyse its principles, is one of the distinctions of modern times. Among the ancients, scarcely any thing of this sort was known. Comprehensive theories, and subtle disquisitions, are not unfrequent in their writings ; but they are chiefly employed for the illustration of different modes of virtue, and the establishment of different ideas of the supreme good. Their most abstracted speculations had almost always a practical tendency. The schoolmen, indeed, were deeply immersed in metaphysical speculations. They fatigued their readers in the pursuit of endless abstractions and distinctions ; but the design, even of these writers, seems rather to have been, accurately to arrange and define the objects of thought, than to explore the mental faculties themselves. The nature of particular and universal ideas, time, space, infinity, together with the mode of existence to be ascribed to the Supreme Being, chiefly engaged the attention of the mightiest minds in the middle ages. Acute in the highest degree, and endued with a wonderful patience of thinking, they yet, by a mistaken direction of their powers, wasted themselves in endless logomachies, and displayed more of a teazing subtlety than of philosophical depth. They chose rather to strike into the dark and intricate by-paths of metaphysical science, than to pursue a career of useful discovery : and as their disquisitions were neither adorned by taste, nor reared on a basis of extensive knowledge, they gradually fell into neglect, when juster views in philosophy made their appearance. Still, they will remain a mighty monument of the utmost which the mind of man can accomplish in the field of abstraction. If the metaphysician does not find in the schoolmen the materials of his work, he will perceive the study of their writings to be of excellent benefit in sharpening his tools. They will aid his acuteness, though they may fail to enlarge his knowledge.

When the inductive and experimental philosophy, recommended by Bacon, had, in the hands of Boyle and

Newton, led to such brilliant discoveries in the investigation of matter, an attempt was soon made to transfer the same method of proceeding to the mind. Hobbes, a man justly infamous for his impiety, but of extraordinary penetration, first set the example; which was not long after followed by Locke, who was more indebted to his predecessor than he had the candour to acknowledge. His celebrated Essay has been generally considered as the established code of metaphysics. The opinions and discoveries of this great man have since been enriched by large accessions, and, on some points, corrected and amended, by the labours of Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and a multitude of other writers. Still, there seems to be a principle of mortality inherent in metaphysical science, which, sooner or later, impairs the reputation of its most distinguished adepts. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that there has never been a reputation of this kind which has continued with undiminished lustre through the revolutions of a century. The fame of Locke is visibly on the decline; the speculations of Malebranche are scarcely heard of in France; and Kant, the greatest metaphysical name on the Continent, sways a doubtful sceptre amidst a host of opponents. It is not our intention to inquire at large into the reason of the transitory fame acquired by this class of writers. Whether it be that the science itself rests on a precarious foundation; that its discoveries can never be brought to a decisive test; that it is too remote from the business of life to be generally interesting; that it does not compensate by its use, for its defect in the fascinations of pleasure; and that it is not, like the intricacies of law, interwoven with the institutions of society: the fact itself is unquestionable. He who aspires to a reputation that shall survive the vicissitudes of opinion and of time, must aim at some other character than that of a metaphysician.

Grand and imposing in its appearance, it seems to lay claim to universal empire, and to supply the measures and the criteria of all other knowledge; but it resembles in its progress the conquests of a Sesostris and a Bacchus, who overran kingdoms and provinces with ease, but made

no permanent settlements, and soon left no trace of their achievements.

The case is very different with the popular writers, who, without attempting to form a theory, or to trace to their first elements, the vast assemblage of passions and principles which enter into the composition of man, are satisfied with describing him as he is. These writers exhibit characters, paint manners, and display human nature in those natural and affecting lights, under which it will always appear to the eye of an acute and feeling observer. Without staying to inquire why it is that men think, feel, reason, remember,—are attracted by some objects or repelled by others, they take them as they are, and delineate the infinitely various modifications and appearances assumed by our essential nature. From the general mass of human passions and manners, they detach such portions as they suppose will admit of the most beautiful illustrations, or afford the most instructive lessons. Next to a habit of self-reflection, accompanied with an attentive survey of real life, writers of this kind are the best guides in the acquisition of that most important branch of knowledge, an acquaintance with mankind. As they profess to consider human nature under some particular aspect, their views are necessarily more limited than those of metaphysical writers; but if they are less extensive, they are more certain; if they occupy less ground, they cultivate it better. In the language of Bacon, "they come home to men's business and bosom." As they aim at the delineation of living nature, they can never deviate far from truth and reality without becoming ridiculous; while, for the fidelity of their representations, they appeal to the common sense of mankind, the dictates of which they do little more than embody and adorn. The system of Locke or of Hartley, it is possible to conceive, may be exploded by the prevalence of a different theory; but it is absurd to suppose, that the remarks on life and manners contained in the writings of Addison or of Johnson, can ever be discredited by a future moralist. In the formation of a theory, more especially in matters so subtle and complicated as those which relate to the mind,

the sources of error are various. When a chain of reasoning consists of many links, a failure of connexion in any part will produce a mass of error in the result, proportioned to the length to which it is extended. In a complicated combination, if the enumeration of particulars in the outset is not complete, the mistake is progressive and incurable. In the ideal philosophy of Locke, for example, if the sources of sensation are not sufficiently explored, or if there be, as some of the profoundest thinkers have suspected, other sources of ideas than those of sensation, the greater part of his system falls to the ground. The popular writers, of whom we have been speaking, are not exposed to such dangers. It is possible, indeed, that many particular views may be erroneous; but, as their attention is continually turned to living nature, provided they be possessed of competent talents, their general delineations cannot fail of being distinguished by fidelity and truth. While a few speculative men amuse themselves with discussing the comparative merits of different metaphysical systems, these are the writers, whose sentiments, conveyed through innumerable channels, form the spirit of the age; nor is it to be doubted, that the Spectator and the Rambler have imparted a stronger impulse to the public mind than all the metaphysical systems in the world. On this account we are highly gratified when we meet with a writer, who, to a vein of profound and original thought, together with just views of religion and of morals, joins the talent of recommending his ideas by the graces of imagination, and the powers of eloquence. Such a writer we have the happiness of reviewing at present. Mr. Foster's name is probably new to most of our readers; but, if we may judge from the production before us, he cannot long be concealed from the notice and applause of the literary world. In an age of mediocrity, when the writing of books has become almost a mechanical art, and a familiar acquaintance with the best models has diffused taste, and diminished genius, it is impossible to peruse an author who displays so great original powers without a degree of surprise. We are ready to inquire by what peculiar

felicity he was enabled to desert the trammels of custom, to break the spell by which others feel themselves bound, and to maintain a career so perfectly uncontrolled and independent. A cast of thought, original and sublime, an unlimited command of imagery, a style varied, vigorous, and bold, are some of the distinguishing features of these very singular Essays. We add, with peculiar satisfaction, that they breathe the spirit of piety and benevolence, and bear the most evident indications of a heart deeply attached to scriptural truths. Though Mr. F. has thought fit to give to his work the title of "Essays, in a series of *Letters*," the reader must not expect any thing in the epistolary style. They were written, the author informs us, in letters to a friend, but with a view to publication; and in their distinct developement of a subject, and fulness of illustration, they resemble regular dissertations, rather than familiar epistles. We could have wished, indeed, that he had suppressed the title of Letters, as it may excite in the reader an expectation of colloquial ease and grace, which will not be gratified in the perusal. A little attention to this circumstance, though it might have impaired the regularity of their method, would have rendered them more fascinating. The subjects appear to us well chosen, sufficiently uncommon to afford scope for original remarks, and important enough to call forth the exertions of the strongest powers. They are the following: 1. On a Man's writing Memoirs of himself: 2. On Decision of Character: 3. On the application of the Epithet Romantic: 4. On some of the Causes by which Evangelical Religion has been rendered less acceptable to Persons of cultivated Taste.

We shall endeavour to give our readers an idea of the general design of each of these essays; and to enable them, by a few extracts, to judge of the manner in which that design is executed.

In the first essay, the author expatiates at large on the influence of external events in the formation of character. This influence he traces to four sources; instruction, companionship, reading, and attention to the state and manners of mankind.

Among the many objects calculated to form the character and impress the heart, Mr. F. enumerates natural scenery; at the same time deploring that want of fancy and sensibility, which often renders it productive of so little effect. The passage in which he adverts to this subject is so beautiful, that we cannot prevail on ourselves to withhold it from the reader. He will see at once that the writer has viewed nature with the eye of a poet, and has deeply imbibed the delicious enchantment which he so eloquently describes.

" It might be supposed that the scenes of nature, an " amazing assemblage of phenomena, if their effect were " not lost through familiarity, would have a powerful in- " fluence on all opening minds, and transfuse into the " internal economy of ideas and sentiment something of " a character and a colour correspondent to the beauty, " vicissitude, and grandeur, which continually press on " the senses. On minds of genius they often have this " effect; and Beattie's *Minstrel* may be as just as it is a " fascinating description of such a spirit. But on the " greatest number this influence operates feebly; you " will not see the process in children, nor the result in " mature persons. The charms of nature are objects only " of sight and hearing, not of sensibility and imagination; " and even the sight and hearing do not receive impres- " sions sufficiently distinct or forcible for clear recollec- " tion; it is not, therefore, strange that these impressions " seldom go so much deeper than the senses as to awaken " pensiveness or enthusiasm, and fill the mind with an " interior permanent scenery of beautiful images at its " own command. This defect of fancy and sensibility is " unfortunate amidst a creation infinitely rich with grand " and beautiful objects, which, imparting something more " than images to a mind adapted and habituated to con- " verse with nature, inspire an exquisite sentiment that " seems like the emanation of a spirit residing in them. " It is unfortunate, I have thought within these few " minutes, while looking out on one of the most enchant- " ing nights of the most interesting season of the year, " and hearing the voices of a company of persons, to

" whom I can perceive that this soft and solemn shade " over the earth, the calm sky, the beautiful stripes of " cloud, the stars, and waning moon just risen, are things " not in the least more interesting than the walls, ceiling, " and candle-light of a room."—Vol. I. pp. 26, 27. [Pp. 22, 23, *Seventh Edition.*]

Towards the close of the essay, in tracing the steps by which some have arrived at the last stage of daring impiety, the denial of a God, the author evinces, in a masterly manner, the presumption of the atheist, and places the extreme absurdity of pretending to demonstrate the non-existence of a Deity, in a light in which we do not remember to have seen it exhibited. Speaking of a pretended heroism attached to atheistic impiety, he adds :

" But, indeed, it is heroism no longer, if he *knows* that " there is no God. The wonder then turns on the great " process by which a man could grow to the immense " intelligence that can know that there is no God. What " ages, and what lights are requisite for THIS attainment! " This intelligence involves the very attributes of divinity, " while a God is denied. For, unless this man is omni- " present, unless he is at this moment in every place in " the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some " place manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would " be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every " agent in the universe, the one that he does not know " may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in " the universe, and does not know what is so, that which " is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession " of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, " the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. " If he cannot, with certainty, assign the cause of all that " exists, that cause may be a God. If he does not know " every thing that has been done in the immeasurable " ages that are past, some things may have been done by " a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is, pre- " cludes another Deity by being one himself, he cannot " know that the Being whose existence he rejects does " not exist. But he must *know* that he does not exist, " else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the

" temerity with which he firmly avows his rejection, and " acts accordingly."—Vol. I. pp. 60—62. [Pp. 48, 49, *Seventh Edition.*]

The next essay, *On Decision of Character*, appears to us superior to the former. The subject is pursued with greater regularity, the conceptions are more profound, and the style is more chaste and classical. After placing in strong contrast the features of a decisive and of an irresolute character, he proceeds to analyse the elements of which the former is composed. Among these, he assigns the first place to a firm confidence in our own judgement; which, he justly observes, notwithstanding the general disposition of mankind to overrate their powers, is no common attainment. With those who are most disposed to think highly of their own abilities, it is common, when they arrive at the moment of action, to distrust their judgement; and, as the author beautifully expresses it, " their mind seems all at once placed in a misty vacuity, where it reaches round on all sides, and finds nothing to lay hold of." The next ingredient essential to decision of character, is a state of cogent feeling, an intense ardour of mind, precluding indifference and delay. In addition to these qualities, courage is required, without which it is obvious that resolutions the most maturely formed, are liable to vanish at the first breath of opposition. In the remaining part of the essay, Mr. F. illustrates the influence of several circumstances of an external nature, which tend to form or to augment the quality of which he has been treating. The principal of these are *opposition*, *desertion*, and *success*. It would prolong this article too much, to attempt to follow the author in these particulars; suffice it to remark, that under each of them will be found many just and important observations. He concludes with briefly recommending a discipline conducive to the attainment of a decisive character. He particularly insists on the propriety of inuring the mind to a habit of reasoning; and that, not in a superficial and desultory manner, but by steadily following the train till we reach a legitimate conclusion.

We cannot dismiss this part of the work without pre-

senting our readers with an extract from the character of Howard, whose virtues have been emblazoned by the gorgeous eloquence of Burke; but we are mistaken if they have ever been painted in a more masterly manner than in the following portrait:—

" In this distinction *(decision)* no man ever exceeded, " for instance, or ever will exceed, the late illustrious " Howard. The energy of his determination was so " great, that if, instead of being habitual, it had been " shown only for a short time, on particular occasions, it " would have appeared a vehement impetuosity; but by " being unintermitted it had an equability of manner, " which scarcely appeared to exceed the tone of a calm " constancy, it was so totally the reverse of any thing " like turbulence or agitation. It was the calmness of an " intensity, kept uniform by the nature of the human " mind forbidding it to be more, and by the character of " the individual forbidding it to be less. The habitual " passion of his mind was a measure of feeling almost " equal to the temporary extremes and paroxysms of " common minds: as a great river in its customary state, " is equal to a small or moderate one when swollen to a " torrent. The moment of finishing his plans in delibera- " tion, and commencing them in action, was the same. " I wonder what must have been the amount of that " bribe, in emolument or pleasure, that would have de- " tained him a week inactive after their final adjustment. " The law which carries water down a declivity, was not " more unconquerable and invariable, than the deter- " mination of his feelings towards the main object. The " importance of this object held his faculties in a state " of excitement which was too rigid to be affected by " lighter interests, and on which, therefore, the beauties " of nature and of art had no power. He had no leisure " feeling which he could spare to be diverted among the " innumerable varieties of the extensive scene which he " traversed; all his subordinate feelings lost their separate " existence and operation, by falling into the grand one. " There have not been wanting trivial minds to mark " this as a fault in his character. But the mere men of

" taste ought to be silent respecting such a man as " Howard; he is above their sphere of judgement. The " invisible spirits, who fulfil their commission of philan- " thropy among mortals, do not care about pictures, " statues, and sumptuous buildings; and no more did he, " when the time in which he must have inspected and " admired them would have been taken from the work " to which he had consecrated his life.* The curiosity " which he might feel, was reduced to wait till the hour " should arrive when its gratification should be presented " by conscience, which kept a scrupulous charge of all " his time, as the most sacred duty of that hour. If he " was still at every hour, when it came, fated to feel the " attractions of the fine arts but the second claim, they " might be sure of their revenge; for no other man will " ever visit Rome under such a despotic consciousness of " duty, as to refuse himself time for surveying the mag- " nificence of its ruins. Such a sin against taste is very " far beyond the reach of common saintship to commit. " It implied an inconceivable severity of conviction, that " he had *one thing to do;* and that he, who would do " some great thing in this short life, must apply himself " to the work with such a concentration of his forces, as, " to idle spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, " looks like insanity. His attention was so strongly and " tenaciously fixed on his object, that, even at the greatest " distance, as the Egyptian pyramids to travellers, it ap- " peared to him with a luminous distinctness as if it were " nigh, and beguiled the toilsome length of labour and " enterprise by which he was to reach it. It was so " conspicuous before him, that not a step deviated from " the direction, and every movement and every day was " an approximation. As his method referred every thing " he did and thought to the end, and as his exertion did " not relax for a moment, he made the trial, so seldom " made—what is the utmost effect which may be granted " to the last possible efforts of a human agent; and,

* Mr. Howard, however, was not destitute of taste for the fine arts. His house at Cardington was better filled with paintings and drawings, than any other, on a small scale, that we ever saw.—Rev.

"therefore, what he did not accomplish, he might con-
"clude to be placed beyond the sphere of mortal activity,
"and calmly leave to the immediate disposal of Provi-
"dence."—Pp. 156—160. [Pp. 125—128, *Seventh Edition.*]

We have one remark to make, before we conclude our review of this Essay. We are a little apprehensive, that the glowing colours in which the imagination of Mr. F. has painted an unyielding constancy of mind, may tend to seduce some of his readers into an intemperate admiration of that quality, without duly distinguishing the object to which it is directed, and the motives by which it is sustained. We give our author full credit for the purity of his principles; we are firmly persuaded that he is not to be classed among the impious idolaters of mental energy. But we could wish that he had more fully admonished his readers to regard resolution of character not as a virtue, so much as a means of virtue—a mere instrument that owes its value entirely to the purpose to which it is employed; and that, wherever nature has conferred it, an additional obligation is imposed of purifying the principles and regulating the heart. It might, at first view, be thought impossible, as Mr. F. intimates, that men should be found, who are as resolute in the prosecution of criminal enterprises, as they could be supposed to be in the pursuit of the most virtuous objects. It is surely a melancholy proof of something wrong in the constitution of human nature, that a quality so important as that of energetic decision, is so little under the regulation of principle; that constancy is so much more frequently to be seen in what is wrong than in what is right; and, in fine, that the *world* can boast so many more heroes than the *church*.

In the third Essay, *On the Application of the Epithet Romantic*, Mr Foster takes occasion to expose the eagerness with which terms of censure are adopted by men, who, instead of calmly weighing the merits of an undertaking, or a character, think it sufficient to express their antipathy by some opprobrious appellation. The epithet *romantic* holds a distinguished place in the vocabulary of

contempt. If a scheme of action, which it requires much benevolence to conceive, and much vigour to execute, be proposed, by many it will be thought completely exploded, when they have branded it with the appellation of *romantic.* Thus selfishness and indolence, arraying themselves in the garb of wisdom, assume the pride of superiority, when they ought to feel the humiliation of guilt. To imitate the highest examples, to do good in ways not usual to the same rank of life, to make great exertions and sacrifices in the cause of religion and with a view to eternal happiness, to determine without delay, to reduce to practice whatever we applaud in theory, are modes of conduct which the world will generally condemn as romantic, but which this author shows to be founded on the highest reason. In unfolding the true idea of the *romantic*, as applicable to a train of sentiments, or course of conduct, he ascribes whatever may be justly so denominated, to the predominance of the imagination over the other powers. He points out the symptoms of this disease, as apparent—in the expectation of a peculiar destiny, while the fancy paints to itself scenes of unexampled felicity—in overlooking the relation which subsists between ends and means—in counting upon casualties instead of contemplating the stated order of events,—and in hoping to realize the most momentous projects, without any means at all, or by means totally inadequate to the effect. Some of the illustrations which the author introduces in this part of his subject are peculiarly happy. We are delighted to find him treating with poignant ridicule those superficial pretenders, who, without positively disavowing any dependence on divine agency, hope to reform the world, and to bring back a paradisaical state, by the mere force of moral instruction. For the prospect of the general prevalence of virtue and happiness, we are indebted to revelation. We have no reason to suppose the minds of our modern infidels sufficiently elevated to have thought of the cessation of wars, and the universal diffusion of peace and love, but for the information which they have obtained from the Scriptures. From these they derived the doc-

trine of a millennium; and they have received it as they have done every thing else, only to corrupt it: for, exploding all the means by which the Scriptures have taught us to expect the completion of this event, they rely merely on the resources of reason and philosophy. They impiously deck themselves with the spoils of Revelation, and take occasion, from the hopes and prospects which she alone supplies, to deride her assistance, and to idolize the powers of human nature. That Being, who planted christianity by miraculous interposition, and by the effusion of his Spirit produced such effects in the hearts of millions, as afford a specimen and a pledge of an entire renovation, has also assured us, that violence and injustice shall cease, and that *none shall hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God.* But, it seems, Revelation is to have no concern in this work; philosophy is to effect every thing; and we are to look to the Political Justice of Godwin and the Moral Code of Volney, for that which christians were so weak as to expect at the hand of Deity.

The conclusion which our author draws from the insufficiency of mere human agency to effect that great renovation in the character and condition of men, which revelation teaches us to expect, is most just and consolatory. We should have been happy to transcribe the passage; but lest we should exceed our limits, we refer our readers to Vol. II. pp. 87, 88. [Pp. 244—247, *Seventh Edition.*]

The last Essay in these volumes attempts to assign *some of the causes that have rendered evangelical religion less acceptable to persons of cultivated taste.* This essay is the most elaborate. Aware of the delicacy and difficulty of his subject, the author seems to have summoned all the powers of his mind, to enable him to grasp it in all its extent, and to present it in all its force and beauty. This essay is itself sufficient, in our opinion, to procure the author a brilliant and lasting reputation.

It is proper to remind our readers, that, in tracing the causes which have tended to produce in men of taste an

aversion to evangelical religion, Mr. F. avowedly confines himself to those which are of a *subordinate* class, while he fully admits the *primary cause* to be that *inherent corruption* of nature, which renders men strongly indisposed to any communication from heaven. We could, however, have wished that he had insisted on this more largely. The Scriptures ascribe the rejection of the gospel to one general principle: *the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The peculiar doctrines of christianity are distinguished by a spirit irreconcilably at variance with that of the world. The deep repentance it enjoins strikes at the pride and levity of the human heart. The mystery of an incarnate and crucified Saviour must necessarily confound the reason, and shock the prejudices, of a mind which will admit nothing that it cannot perfectly reduce to the principles of philosophy. The whole tenour of the life of Christ, the objects he pursued, and the profound humiliation he exhibited, must convict of madness and folly the favourite pursuits of mankind. The virtues usually practised in society, and the models of excellence most admired there, are so remote from that holiness which is enjoined in the New Testament, that it is impossible for a taste which is formed on the one, to perceive the charms of the other. The happiness which it proposes in an union with God, and a participation of the image of Christ, is so far from being congenial to the inclinations of worldly men, that it can scarcely be mentioned without exciting their ridicule and scorn. General speculations on the Deity have much to amuse the mind, and to gratify that appetite for the wonderful which thoughtful and speculative men are delighted to indulge. Religion, viewed in this light, appears more in the form of an exercise to the understanding, than a law to the heart. Here the soul expatiates at large, without feeling itself controlled or alarmed. But when evangelical truths are presented, they bring God so near, if we may be allowed the expression, and speak with so commanding a voice to the conscience, that they leave no alterna-

tive but that of submissive acquiescence or proud revolt. As men of taste are, for the most part, men of the world, not at all distinguished from others by a greater familiarity with religious ideas, these observations are applicable to them in their utmost extent.

Though we thought it right to suggest these hints, we wish not to be understood to convey any censure on Mr. F. for confining his attention principally to other topics. In discussing more fully and profoundly some of the subordinate causes, which have come in aid of the primary one, to render men of cultivated taste averse to evangelical piety, we think he has rendered an important service to the public.

The first cause he assigns is, that of its being the religion of many weak and uncultivated minds; in consequence of which it becomes inseparably associated, in the conceptions of many, with the intellectual poverty of its disciples, so as to wear a mean and degraded aspect. We regret that we cannot follow the author in his illustration of this topic. We must be content with observing, that he has exposed the weakness of this prejudice in a most masterly and triumphant manner.

The second cause which the author assigns as having had, in his opinion, a considerable influence in prejudicing elegant and cultivated minds against evangelical piety, is the peculiarity of language adopted in the discourses and books of its teachers, the want of a more classical form of diction, and the profusion of words and phrases which are of a technical and systematical cast.

We are inclined to think, with Mr. F., that the cause of religion has suffered considerably from the circumstance here mentioned. The superabundance of phrases appropriated by some pious authors to the subject of religion, and never applied to any other purpose, has not only the effect of disgusting persons of taste, but of obscuring religion itself. As they are seldom defined, and never exchanged for equivalent words, they pass current without being understood. They are not the vehicle,—they are the substitute of thought. Among a certain description of christians, they become, by de-

grees, regarded with a mystic awe, insomuch that if a writer expressed the very same ideas in different phrases, he would be condemned as a heretic. To quit the magical circle of words, in which many christians suffer themselves to be confined, excites as great a clamour as the boldest innovation in sentiment. Controversies, which have been agitated with much warmth, might often have been amicably adjusted, or even finally decided, could the respective partisans have been prevailed upon to lay aside their predilection for phrases, and honestly resolve to examine their real import. In defiance of the dictates of candour and good sense, these have been obstinately retained, and have usually been the refuge of ignorance, the apple of discord, and the watch-words of religious hostility. In some instances, the evil which we lament has sprung from a more amiable cause. The force and solemnity of devotional feelings are such, that they seem to consecrate every thing with which they have been connected; and as the bulk of pious people have received their religious impressions from teachers more distinguished for their simplicity and zeal, than for comprehension of mind and copiousness of language, they learn to annex an idea of sanctity to that set of phrases with which they have been most familiar. These become the current language of religion, to which subsequent writers conform, partly, perhaps, from indolence, and partly from the fear of offending their brethren.

To these causes we may add the contentious and sectarian spirit of modern times, which has taught the different parties of christians to look on one another with an unnatural horror, to apprehend contamination from the very phrases employed by each other, and to invent, each for itself, a dialect as narrow and exclusive as their whimsical singularities. But while we concur, in the main, with Mr. F. on this subject, we are disposed to think that he has carried his representations too far, both with respect to the magnitude of the abuse itself, and the probable advantages which would ensue on its removal. The repugnance of the human mind, in its

unenlightened state, to the peculiarities of the christian doctrine, is such, that we have little hope of its yielding to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely. Till it is touched and humbled by grace, we are apprehensive that it will retain its aversion, and not suffer itself to be cheated into an approbation of the gospel by any artifice of words. Exhibit evangelical religion in what colours you will, the worldly-minded and the careless will shrink from the obtrusion of unwelcome ideas. Cowper has become, in spite of his religion, a popular poet, but his success has not been such as to make religion popular; nor have the gigantic genius and fame of Milton shielded from the ridicule and contempt of his admirers, that system of religion which he beheld with awful adoration.

In treating subjects properly theological, we apprehend great caution should be used not to deviate wantonly and unnecessarily from the phraseology of scripture. The apostle tells us, that in preaching the gospel he did not use the enticing words of man's wisdom, but such words as the Holy Ghost taught him. We do not, indeed, contend, that in the choice of every particular word or phrase he was immediately inspired; but we think it reasonable to believe that the unction which was on his heart, and the perfect illumination that he possessed, led him to employ such terms in the statement of the mysteries of christianity, as were better adapted than any others to convey their real import, which we are the more inclined to conclude, from observing the sameness of phraseology which pervades the writings of the apostles, when they are treating on the same subject. As the truths which the revelation of the New Testament unfolds are perfectly original, and transcendently important, it might naturally be expected that the communication of them would give birth to an original cast of phraseology, or, in other words, a steady adherence to certain terms, in order to render the ideas which they convey fixed, precise, and unchangeable.

In teaching the principles of every science, it is found necessary to select or invent terms, which, though origi-

nally of a laxer signification, are afterwards restricted and confined *to one peculiar modification of thought*, and constitute the technical language of that science. Such terms are always capable of being defined (for mere words convey nothing to the mind); but to substitute a definition in their place would be tedious circumlocution, and to exchange the term itself for a different one, would frequently lead to dangerous mistakes.

In the original elementary parts of a language, there are, in truth, few or no synonymes; for what should prompt men, in the early period of literature, to invent a word that neither conveyed any new idea, nor enabled them to present an old one with more force and precision? In the progress of refinement, indeed, regard to copiousness and harmony has enriched language with many exotics, which are merely those words in a foreign language that perfectly correspond to terms in our own; as *felicity* for *happiness*, *celestial* for *heavenly*, and a multitude of others. Since, then, the nature of language is such, that no two terms are exactly of the same force and import (except in the case last mentioned), we cannot but apprehend that dangerous consequences would result from a studied attempt to vary from the standard phraseology, where the statement of doctrines is concerned, and that, by changing the terms, the ideas themselves might be changed or mutilated. In teaching a religion designed for the use and benefit of all mankind, it is certainly desirable that the technical words, the words employed in a peculiar and appropriate sense, should be few; but to fix and perpetuate the ideas, and to preserve *the faith once delivered to the saints*, from the caprices of fancy, and the dangers of innovation, it seems necessary that there should be some. We are inclined to think, that in inculcating christian morality, and in appeals and addresses to the heart, a much greater latitude may be safely indulged, than in the statement of *peculiar doctrines;* and that a more bold and varied diction, with a wider range of illustration and allusion than is usually employed, would often be attended with the happiest effect. Mr. Foster has given, in many parts

of these volumes, beautiful specimens of what we intend.

With respect to the copious use of scripture language, which Mr. F. condemns, (in our opinion with too much severity,) as giving an uncouth and barbarous air to theological books, we prefer a middle course; without applauding the excess to which it is carried by many pious writers, on the one hand; or wishing it to be kept so entirely apart as Mr. F. contends for, on the other. To say nothing of the inimitable beauties of the Bible, considered in a literary view, which are universally acknowledged, it is the book which every devout man is accustomed to consult as the oracle of God; it is the companion of his best moments, and the vehicle of his strongest consolations. Intimately associated in his mind with every thing dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other; and when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a religious discourse, which nothing else can supply. Besides, is there not room to apprehend, that a studied avoidance of the scripture phraseology, and a care to express all that it is supposed to contain in the forms of classical diction, might ultimately lead to a neglect of the Scriptures themselves, and a habit of substituting flashy and superficial declamation in the room of the saving truths of the gospel? Such an apprehension is but too much verified by the most celebrated sermons of the French; and still more by some modern compositions in our own language, which usurp that title. For devotional impression, we conceive that a very considerable tincture of the language of the scriptures, or at least such a colouring as shall discover an intimate acquaintance with those inimitable models, will generally succeed best.

It is impossible to establish an universal rule, since different methods are equally adapted to different purposes; and, therefore, we are willing to allow with Mr. F. that, where the fashionable and the gay are addressed, and the prejudices arising from a false refinement are to be conciliated, whatever in the diction might repel by an

appearance of singularity, should be carefully shunned. Accordingly, we equally admire, in *The Rise and Progress of Religion*, by Dr. Doddridge, and in *The Rural Philosophy* of Mr. Bates, the dexterity with which these excellent writers have suited their composition to their respective classes of readers. On the whole, let it once for all be remembered, that men of taste form a very small part of the community, of no greater consequence in the eyes of their Creator than others; that the end of all religious discourse is the salvation of souls; and that to a mind which justly estimates the weight of eternal things, it will appear a greater honour to have converted a sinner from the error of his way, than to have wielded the thunder of a Demosthenes, or to have kindled the flame of a Cicero.

We hasten to close this article, by making a few observations on the last cause which our author has assigned, for the general distaste that persons of polite and elegant attainments usually discover toward evangelical religion. This is, the neglect and contempt with which it has been almost constantly treated by our fine writers; of whose delinquency, in this respect, the author takes a wide and extensive survey, exposing their criminality with a force of eloquence that has perhaps never before been exerted on this subject. Though his attention is chiefly directed to the influence of modern literature, yet, as the writings of the ancients, and especially of the poets, have had a powerful operation in forming the taste and sentiments of succeeding generations, he has extended his notice to these, and has made some most striking animadversions on the ancient authors of the epopœia, and particularly on Homer.

We must do justice to his intrepidity in venturing to attack the idol of all classical scholars: nor can he have failed to foresee the manner in which it would be attempted to be repelled. They will remind him, that the lawfulness of defensive war has seldom been called in question; that the one in which Homer's heroes were engaged, was not only just, but meritorious, being undertaken to avenge a most signal affront and injury; that

no subject could be more suited to the epic muse, either on account of its magnitude, or the deep interest it excited; that having chosen it, the poet is to be commended for throwing into it all the fire of which it was susceptible; that to cherish in the breasts of youth a gallant and warlike spirit, is the surest defence of nations; and that this spirit, under proper regulations, constitutes that θυμοειδης which Plato extols so highly in his Republic, as the basis of a manly, heroic character. This, and much more than this, will be said: but when our Grecians have spent all their arrows, it will remain an incontestable fact, that an enthusiastic admiration of the Iliad of Homer is but a bad preparation for relishing the beauties of the New Testament. What then is to be done? Shall we abandon the classics, and devote ourselves solely to the perusal of modern writers, where the maxims inculcated, and the principles taught, are little, if at all, more in unison with those of christianity? —a fact, which Mr. F. acknowledges and deplores. While things continue as they are, we are apprehensive, therefore, that we should gain nothing by neglecting the unrivalled productions of genius left us by the ancients, but a deterioration of taste, without any improvement in religion. The evil is not to be corrected by any partial innovation of this kind. Until a more christian spirit pervades the world, we are inclined to think that the study of the classics is, on the whole, advantageous to public morals, by inspiring an elegance of sentiment, and an elevation of soul, which we should in vain seek for elsewhere.

The total inattention of the great majority of our fine writers, to all the distinguishing features of the religion they profess, affords a most melancholy reflection. It has no doubt excited the notice of many, and has been deeply lamented; but it has never been placed in a light so serious and affecting as in the volumes before us. In the observations which our author makes on the Essay on Man, we are delighted and surprised to find at once so much philosophical truth and poetical beauty. His critique on the writings of Addison and Johnson, evinces

deep penetration; and, as it respects the former, is uncommonly impressive and important.

We take our leave of this work with sincere reluctance. For the length to which we have extended our review, the subject must be our apology. It has fared with us, as with a traveller who passes through an enchanting country, where he meets with so many beautiful views and so many striking objects which he is loath to quit, that he loiters till the shades of evening insensibly fall upon him. We are far, however, from recommending these volumes as faultless. Mr. F.'s work is rather an example of the power of genius, than a specimen of finished composition: it lies open in many points to the censure of those minor critics, who, by the observation of a few technical rules, may easily avoid its faults, without reaching one of its beauties. The author has paid too little attention to the construction of his sentences. They are for the most part too long, sometimes involved in perplexity, and often loaded with redundances. They have too much of the looseness of an harangue, and too little of the compact elegance of regular composition. An occasional obscurity pervades some parts of the work. The mind of the writer seems at times to struggle with conceptions too mighty for his grasp, and to present confused masses, rather than distinct delineations of thought. This, however, is to be imputed to the originality, not the weakness, of his powers. The scale on which he thinks is so vast, and the excursions of his imagination are so extended, that they frequently carry him into the most unbeaten track, and among objects where a ray of light glances in an angle only without diffusing itself over the whole. On ordinary topics, his conceptions are luminous in the highest degree. He places the idea which he wishes to present in such a flood of light, that it is not merely visible itself, but it seems to illumine all around it. He paints metaphysics, and has the happy art of arraying what in other hands would appear cold and comfortless abstractions, in the warmest colours of fancy. Without the least affectation of frivolous ornaments, without quitting his argument in pursuit of imagery, his imagi-

nation becomes the perfect handmaid of his reason, ready at every moment to spread her canvass, and present her pencil. But what pleases us most, and affords us the highest satisfaction, is to find such talents enlisted on the side of true christianity; nor can we help indulging a benevolent triumph at the accession of powers to the cause of evangelical piety, which its most distinguished opponents would be proud to possess.

REVIEW

OF

CUSTANCE ON THE CONSTITUTION.

A Concise View of the Constitution of England. By George Custance. *Dedicated, by permission, to William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P. for the County of York.* 12mo. pp. 474. Price 6s. bds. Kidderminster: Gower. London: Longman and Co. Hatchard. 1808.

It were surely to be wished, that every man had a competent acquaintance with the laws and constitution of the country to which he belongs. Patriotism is a blind and irrational impulse, unless it is founded on a knowledge of the blessings we are called to secure, and the privileges we propose to defend. In a tyrannical state, it is natural for the ruling power to cherish political ignorance, which can alone reconcile men to the tame surrender of their natural rights. The diffusion of light and knowledge is very unfavourable to ill-founded pretensions of every sort, but to none more than the encroachments of arbitrary power and lawless violence. The more we explore the recesses of a dungeon, the less likely are we to be reconciled to take up our residence in it. But the venerable fabric of the British constitution, our hereditary mansion, whether it be tried by the criterion of convenience or of beauty, of ancient prescription or of practical utility, will bear the most rigid examination; and the more it is contemplated, will be the more admired.

The Romans were so conscious of the importance of imparting to the rising generation an early knowledge of their laws and constitution, that the contents of the twelve tables were committed to memory, and formed one of the first elements of public instruction. They were sensible that what lays hold of the mind at so early

a period, is not only likely to be long remembered, but is almost sure to command veneration and respect. We are not aware that similar attempts have been made to render the British youth acquainted with the principles of our admirable constitution, not inferior surely to that of the Roman republic; a defect in the system of education, which the circumstances of the present crisis loudly call upon us to supply. When our existence as an independent nation is threatened, when unexampled sacrifices must be made, and, perhaps, the utmost efforts of patience and of persevering courage exerted for our preservation, an attachment to that constitution which is the basis of all our prosperity, cannot be too zealously promoted or too deeply felt. It is a just and enlightened estimate of the invaluable blessings that constitution secures, which alone can make us sustain our present burdens without repining, as well as prepare us for greater privations and severer struggles. For this reason we cannot but look upon the performance before us as a most seasonable publication. One cause of the attention of youth being so little directed to our national laws and constitution, in schools, is probably the want of suitable books. We have an abundance of learned and able writers on these subjects; but few, if any, that are quite adapted to the purpose we are now speaking of. Millar's is a very profound and original work; but it supposes a great deal of previous knowledge, without which it can be scarcely understood, and is in every view better adapted to aid the researches of an antiquary, or the speculations of a philosopher, than to answer the end of an elementary treatise. De Lolme's performance may be deemed more suitable; yet, able and ingenious as it is, it labours under some essential deficiencies, considered in the light of an elementary work. There is in it a spirit of refined speculation, an eagerness to detect and display latent, unthought-of excellencies, in the frame of government, which is very remote from the simplicity requisite in the lessons of youth. Of Blackstone's Commentaries it would be presumptuous in us to attempt an eulogium, after Sir William Jones has pronounced it to

be the *most beautiful outline* that was ever given of any science. Nothing can exceed the luminous arrangement, the vast comprehension, and, we may venture to add from the best authorities, the legal accuracy of this wonderful performance, which, in style and composition, is distinguished by an unaffected grace, a majestic simplicity, which can only be eclipsed by the splendour of its higher qualities. Admirable, however, as these commentaries are, it is obvious that they are much too voluminous and elaborate, to answer the purpose of an introduction to the study of the English constitution. We do, therefore, most sincerely congratulate the public on the appearance of a work, which we can safely recommend, as well fitted to supply a chasm in our system of public instruction. The book before us is, in every view, well adapted for the instruction of youth: the clear and accurate information it conveys upon a most important subject, and the truly christian tincture of its maxims and principles, are well calculated to enlarge the understanding and improve the heart. We beg leave particularly to recommend it to the attention of schools, in which, we conceive, a general acquaintance with the laws and constitution of the country might be cultivated with much advantage, as forming a proper preparation for the active scenes of life. Legal provisions for the security of the best temporal interests of mankind, are the result of so much collective wisdom and experience, and are so continually conversant with human affairs, that we know no study more adapted to invigorate the understanding, and at the same time to give a practical turn to its speculations. The close cohesion of its parts tends to make the mind severely argumentative, while its continual relation to the state of society and its successive revolutions, fences it in on the side of metaphysical abstraction and useless theories. What we look upon (for the reasons already mentioned) to be a most useful and interesting study at all times, we would earnestly recommend as an indispensable duty at the present crisis.

Of the merits of the work before us, the public may form some judgement, when we inform them that it

contains whatever is most interesting to the general reader in Blackstone, together with much useful information derived from Professor Christian, De Lolme, and various other eminent authors. Some will be ready to accuse the writer of having carried his partiality toward whatever is established too far; nor dare we say the charge is entirely unfounded. We are not disposed, however, to be severe upon him on this account. We wish to see the minds of our youth preoccupied with a strong bias in favour of our national institutions. We would wish to see them animated by a warm and generous enthusiasm, and to defer the business of detecting faults, and exposing imperfections, to a future period. Let us only be allowed to remark, that this policy should be temperately employed: lest the mind should suffer a revulsion, and pass, perhaps rather abruptly, from implicit admiration to the contrary extreme; lest, indignant at having been misled, it substitute general censure for undistinguishing applause.

We wish our author had, in common with Blackstone, expressed his disapprobation of the severity of our criminal code. The multiplicity of capital punishments we shall always consider as a reproach to the English nation; though, numerous as they are, they bear no proportion to what they would be, were the law permitted to take its course. The offences deemed capital by the common law are few; the sanguinary complexion of the criminal law, as it now stands, has arisen from the injudicious tampering of the legislature. To us it appears evident, that the *certainty* of punishment will restrain offenders more than its severity; and that, when men are tempted to transgress, they do not weigh the emolument they had in view against the penalty awarded by law, but simply the probability of detection and punishment against that of impunity. Let the punishments be moderate, and this will be the most effectual means of rendering them certain. While nothing can exceed the trial by jury, and the dignified impartiality with which justice is administered, we are compelled to look upon the criminal code with very different emotions, and earnestly to wish it

were carefully revised, and made more humane, simple, and precise.

As little can we concur with the author before us, in the defence he sets up of the donation of pensions and sinecures, where there are no pretensions of personal merit or honourable services. Standing quite aloof from party politics, we must affirm, that to whatever extent such a practice exists, exactly in the same proportion is it a source of public calamity and disgrace. To look at it, as our author does, only in a pecuniary view, is to neglect the principal consideration. It is not merely or chiefly as a waste of public money, that the granting of sinecures and pensions to the undeserving ought to be condemned; the venality and corruption it indicates and produces is its worst feature, and an infallible symptom of a declining state. With these exceptions, we have accompanied the author with almost uninterrupted pleasure, and have been highly gratified with the good sense, the extensive information, and the unaffected piety he displays throughout the work. Though a firm and steady churchman himself, he manifests a truly christian spirit toward the protestant dissenters; and is so far from looking with an evil eye on the large toleration they enjoy, that he contemplates with evident satisfaction the laws on which that toleration is founded.

Of the style of this work, it is but justice to say, that, without aspiring to any high degree of ornament, it is pure, perspicuous, and correct, well suited to the subject on which it is employed.

As a fair specimen of Mr. C.'s manner of thinking, we beg leave to lay before our readers the following just and appropriate remarks on *duelling*:—

"Deliberate duelling falls under the head of *express* "*malice;* and the law of England has justly fixed the "crime and punishment of murder upon both the prin- "cipal and accessaries of this most unchristian practice. "Nothing more is necessary with us, to check this daring "violation of all law, than the same firmness and integrity

"in the trial of duellists which so eminently distinguish "an English jury on all other occasions.

"Perhaps it will be asked, what are *men of honour* to "do, if they must not appeal to the pistol and sword? "The answer is obvious: if one *gentleman* has offended "another, he cannot give a more indisputable proof of "genuine courage, than by making a frank acknowledge- "ment of his fault, and asking forgiveness of the injured "party. On the other hand, if he have received an "affront, he ought freely to forgive, as he hopes to be "forgiven of God. And if either of the parties aggra- "vate the matter by sending a challenge to fight, the "other must not be a partaker of sin, if he would obey "God rather than man.

"Still it will be said, that a *military* or *naval* man, at "least, must not decline a challenge, if he would main- "tain the character of a man of courage. But is it not "insulting the loyalty and good sense of the brave de- "fenders of our laws, to imagine that they of all men "must violate them to preserve their honour; since the "king has expressly forbidden any military man to send "a challenge to fight a duel, upon pain of being cashiered, "if an officer; and of suffering corporal punishment, if "a non-commissioned officer, or private soldier? Nor "ought any officer or soldier to upbraid another for re- "fusing a challenge, whom his Majesty positively declares "*he* considers as having only acted in obedience to his "royal orders; and fully acquits of any disgrace that "may be attached to his conduct.* Besides what neces- "sary connexion is there between the fool-hardiness of "one who risks the eternal perdition of his neighbour "and of himself in an unlawful combat, and the patriotic "bravery of him who, when *duty* calls, boldly engages "the enemy of his king and country? None will dis- "pute the courage of the excellent Colonel Gardiner, "who was slain at the battle of Preston Pans, in the "rebellion of 1745. Yet he once refused a challenge,

* "See articles of War sec. 7."

" with this dignified remark: ' I fear sinning, though I " do not fear fighting.'* The fact is, that fighting a " duel is so far from being a proof of a man's possessing " *true* courage, that it is an infallible mark of his " *cowardice.* For he is influenced by ' the fear of man,' " whose praise he loveth more than the praise of God."

* " See Doddridge's Life of Colonel Gardiner, an interesting piece " of Biography, worthy the perusal of every officer in the army and navy."

REVIEW

OF

ZEAL WITHOUT INNOVATION.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It was the opinion of some sincere friends of religion, that a republication of the following strictures might have its use in certain quarters, where the literary journal in which they first appeared may possibly not have extended. The writer of these remarks has nothing in view but the promotion of christian charity, the vindication of calumniated innocence, and the counteraction of those insidious arts by which designing men are seeking to advance their personal interest, or those of a party, at the expense of truth and justice. How far the author here animadverted upon falls under this description, must be left to the decision of an impartial public. If it be thought that more commendation ought to have been given in the following strictures to those parts of the work which are confessedly unexceptionable, the writer must be allowed to remark, that the effect of what is good in the performance is entirely defeated by the large infusion of what is of an opposite quality. In appreciating the merits of a writer, the general tendency of his work should be principally regarded, without suffering the edge of censure to be abated by such a mixture of truth as only serves to give a safer and wider circulation to misrepresentation and falsehood.

It has been deemed a capital omission in the following critique, that no notice is taken of the author's illiberal treatment of the puritans. This omission arose partly from a wish to avoid prolixity, and partly from an apprehension it would lead to a discussion not perfectly

relevant to the matter in hand. It would be no difficult matter to construct such a defence of the puritans as would leave this or any other author very little to reply; but to do justice to the subject would require a deduction of facts, and a series of arguments, quite inconsistent with the limits to which we are confined. To oppose assertion to assertion, and invective to invective, could answer no end but the reviving animosities which we should be happy to see for ever extinguished. The controversy betwixt the puritans and their opponents turns entirely on these two questions:—Has any religious society, assuming the name of a church, a right to establish new terms of communion, distinct from those enjoined by Christ and his apostles? Admitting they have such a right, ought these terms to consist in things which the imposers acknowledge to be indifferent, and the party on whom they are enjoined look upon as sinful? Is not this a palpable violation of the apostolical injunction, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations?" We are persuaded we speak the sentiments of some of the best men in the church of England, when we assert that the basis of communion was made narrower at the reformation than is consistent with the dictates of christian charity or sound policy, and that the puritans were treated with a severity altogether unjustifiable. The author of Zeal without Innovation declares himself "dissatisfied with the trite remark that there were faults on both sides, when the guilt of aggression rests so clearly on the heads of the nonconformists." To infer their guilt as aggressors, because they were the first to complain, is begging the question at issue. Before we are entitled to criminate them on this head, it is requisite to inquire into the *justice* of their complaints. They who first discover a truth, are naturally the first to impugn the opposite error. They who find themselves aggrieved are necessarily the first to complain. So that to attach culpability to the party which betrays the first symptoms of dissatisfaction, without farther inquiry, is to confer on speculative error, and on practical tyranny, a claim to unalterable perpetuity—a doctrine well suited

to the mean and slavish maxims inculcated by this writer. The learned Warburton was as little satisfied as himself with the trite remark of there being faults on both sides, but for an opposite reason. "It would be hard," he affirms, "to say who are most to blame; those who oppose established authority for things indifferent; or that authority which rigidly insists on them, and will abate nothing for the sake of tender, misinformed consciences: I say it would be hard to solve this, had not the apostle done it for us, where he says, 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and *not to please ourselves.*' 'I myself,' says he, 'do so, and all for the gospel's sake.' This is the man who tells us he had fought a good fight and overcome. And we may believe him; for in this contention, he is always the conqueror who submits."

When the question is fairly put, whether a tender conscience, admitting it to be erroneous, shall be forced, or the imposition of things confessedly indifferent be dropped, it can surely require but little sagacity to return a decisive answer. The arguments which induced Locke to give his suffrage in favour of the nonconformists, the reasons which prevailed on Baxter and on Howe to quit stations of usefulness in the church, and doom themselves to an unprofitable inactivity, will not easily be deemed light or frivolous. The English nation has produced no men more exempt from the suspicion of weakness or caprice than these.

Desirous of composing, rather than inflaming, the dissensions which unhappily subsist among christians, we decline entering farther on this topic, heartily praying, with the apostle, that "grace may be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

REVIEW.

Zeal without Innovation: or, the Present State of Religion and Morals considered, with a View to the Dispositions and Measures required for its Improvement. To which is subjoined, an Address to young Clergymen, intended to guard them against some prevalent Errors. 1808.

There are some works which require to be viewed only in a literary light. No important principles are discussed, nor any momentous interests at stake. When this is the case, nothing more is necessary than for a reviewer to exhibit the author's plan, and to give an impartial judgement on the ability with which it is executed. If the merit of the performance be very conspicuous, it is the less necessary to multiply words in order to show it; and if it have little or none, it need not be conducted to the land of forgetfulness with the pomp of criticism. For this reason, the utility of periodical criticism may, in a literary view, be fairly questioned; as it seems like an attempt to anticipate the decision of the public, and prematurely to adjust those pretensions, which, if left to itself, it will be sure to adjust, in time, with the most perfect impartiality. A reviewer may give a momentary popularity to what deserves to be forgotten, but he can neither withhold nor bestow a lasting fame. Cowper, we will venture to say, is not the less admired because the Critical Review, with its usual good taste and discernment, could discover in him no traces of poetic genius.

There are other works, which owe their importance more to the subjects on which they treat, and their tendency to inflame the prejudices, and strike in with the humour, of the public, than to any extraordinary ability.

Their infection renders them formidable. They are calculated to increase the violence of an epidemic disease. The matter of contagion ought not to be slighted on account of the meanness of the vehicle by which it is transmitted. We are sorry to be under the necessity of classing the performance before us with works of that nature; but our conviction of its deserving that character must be our apology for bestowing a degree of attention upon it to which it is not otherwise entitled. The author's professed design is to present a view of the state of religion and morals, and to suggest such remedies as are best adapted to correct the disorder under which they languish. A more noble and important undertaking cannot be conceived. We have only to lament that, in the pursuit of it, he betrays so many mean partialities and ungenerous prejudices, as utterly disqualify him from doing justice to the subject. While we would wish to give him credit for *some* portion of good intention, we are firmly convinced, that had *his eye been single, his whole body had been* more *full of light.* In an attempt to trace the causes of degeneracy in religion and morals, and to point out the proper correctives, nothing is more requisite than a large and catholic spirit, totally emancipated from the shackles of party, joined with extensive knowledge and a discriminating judgement. In the first of these qualities the author is lamentably deficient. He looks at every thing so entirely through the medium of party, that, though he cannot be said to be absolutely blind, he is quite incapable of seeing afar off. His remarks are often shrewd; such as indicate a mind awake and attentive to the scenes which have passed before him. He is sometimes acute, never comprehensive; accurate in details, with little capacity for tracing the consequences and unfolding the energy of general principles. While the title of the work leads us to expect his attention would be entirely directed to the best means of promoting the moral improvement of mankind, the watchful reader will perceive there are *subordinate objects* which he is at least equally solicitous to advance. There is a complication in his views, *a wheel*

within a wheel, quite incompatible with simplicity of mind and perfect purity of intention. There appears too much reason to regard him as an artful, bigoted partizan, acting under the disguise of a philanthropist and a reformer. Severe as this censure may seem, we are persuaded our readers will acknowledge its justice, when they are apprised of the leading statements and positions contained in this singular work.

The author sets out with descanting on the state of religion in this country, which he represents as very deplorable: in proof of this, he adduces, among other facts, the violation of the christian sabbath, and the prevailing neglect of public worship. As these symptoms of degeneracy are not found in an equal degree among dissenters and methodists, he is led, by the course of his subject, to notice the state of religion amongst them, where he acknowledges there is no room to complain of a deficiency of zeal. He does not affect to deny that their teachers exhibit the great truths of christianity with energy and effect, and that much good has resulted from their labours. We should naturally suppose a pious man would here find ground for satisfaction, and that, however he might regret the mixture of error with useful efforts, he would rejoice to perceive that real and important good was done any where. It is but justice to him to let him convey his feelings on this subject in his own words.

"From the sad state of things represented in the "preceding section many turn with pleasure to what is "passing among our separatists, whose places of wor-"ship generally exhibit a very different scene to our "parish churches. Here there appears to be some life "and effect. The officiating minister has not half-empty "pews to harangue, but a crowded auditory 'hanging "on his lips.' Whether, however, in what is now before "us, we shall find no cause of uneasiness, when all its "circumstances are considered, admits of great doubt.

"It cannot be denied, that, with all the fanaticism "charged on separatists, (and it is to be feared with "great truth in some instances,) many a profligate has

" been reclaimed, and much good in other ways has
" been done among the lower orders, by the labours of
" their ministers. From these circumstances, and the
" known ignorance and dissoluteness of the times, many,
" without the least degree of adverse intention to our
" established church, have, in the simplicity of their
" hearts, concurred in forwarding the endeavours of the
" separatists. And hence it is, that, in all the more
" populous parts of the country, we see that multitude
" of dissenting chapels, which of late years has increased,
" and is still increasing.

" To some good men, free from all prejudice against
" the church of England, it is matter of no regret that
" the number of separatists increases, provided there be,
" with this circumstance, an increasing regard to christi-
" anity. With such persons, all consideration of forms,
" and modes of worship, is sunk in the greater import-
" ance of genuine faith and piety. But it enters not in
" the thoughts of such persons, that 'tares may spring
" up with the wheat,' and that what at present has a
" good effect, may operate to the production of some-
" thing hereafter of a very different nature. Now such
" we conceive to be the nature of the case before us.
" We have reason to apprehend ill consequences from
" increasing separatism, with whatever zeal for import-
" ant truths, and with whatever success in propagating
" them, it be at present accompanied.

" And first, it may be observed that it goes to the
" annihilation of the established church as a national
" institution. The bulk of every newly-raised congre-
" gation of separatists is composed of persons educated
" within the pale of the church of England. Of these,
" many are heads of families, or likely to become so.
" By commencing dissenters, they, and their posterity,
" however multiplied, are broken off from the national
" church. These detachments from the establishment,
" going on as they have done of late years, must, con-
" sequently, increase the number of those who prefer
" a differently constituted church; and these may in
" time amount to such a majority, as to render it again

" a question with those in power, whether the church of " England shall any longer have the support of the " state."—Pp. 14—17.

That the increase of dissenters, *in itself considered*, cannot be a pleasing circumstance to a conscientious churchman, is certain; and if this is all the author means to say, he talks very idly. The true question evidently is, whether the good accruing from the labours of dissenters is a proper subject of congratulation, *although* it may be attended with this incidental consequence, an increased separation from the established church. In a word, is the promotion of genuine christianity, or the advancement of an external communion, the object primarily to be pursued? Whatever excellence may be ascribed to our national establishment by its warmest admirers, still it is a human institution—an institution to which the first ages of the church were strangers, to which christianity was in no degree indebted for its original success, and the merit of which must be brought to the test of utility. It is in the order of means. As an expedient devised by the wisdom of our ancestors for promoting true religion, it is entitled to support just as far as it accomplishes its end. This end, however, is found, in some instances, to be accomplished by means which are of a different description. A fire, which threatens immediate destruction, is happily extinguished before it has had time to extend its ravages; but it is extinguished by persons who have volunteered their services, without waiting for the engineers, who act under the direction of the police. Here is *zeal*, but, unfortunately, accompanied with *innovation*, at which our author is greatly chagrined. How closely has he copied the example of St. Paul, who rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from envy and contention! With him, the promulgation of divine truth was an object so much at heart, that he was glad to see it accomplished, even from the most criminal motives, and by the most unworthy instruments. With our author, the dissemination of the same truth, by some of the best of men, and from the purest motives, is matter of

lamentation and regret. It requires little attention to perceive he has been taught in a different school from the apostle, and studied under a different master.

The eternal interests of mankind are either mere chimæras, or they are matters of infinite importance; compared with which, the success of any party, the increase of any external communion whatever, is mere dust in the balance; and for this plain reason, that the promotion of these interests is the very end of christianity itself. However divided good men may have been with respect to the propriety of legislative interference in the affairs of religion, the arguments by which they have supported their respective opinions have been uniformly drawn from the supposed tendency of such interference, or the contrary, to advance the moral improvement of mankind; and, supposing this to be ascertained, the superior merit of the system to which that tendency belongs was considered as decided. Viewed in this light, the problem is extensive, affording scope for much investigation; while the authority of religion remains unimpaired, and the disputants on each side are left at liberty to indulge the most enlarged sentiments of candour towards each other. Such were the principles on which Hooker and the ablest of his successors rested their defence of the established church. The high church party, of which Mr. Daubeny may be looked upon as the present leader, have taken different grounds. Their system is neither more nor less than popery, faintly disguised, and adapted to the meridian of England. The writer before us, without avowing the sentiments of Daubeny, displays nearly the same intolerance and bigotry,—under this peculiar disadvantage, that his views want the cohesion of system, his bigotry the support of principle. This formal separation of the interests of the church from those of true religion, must inevitably produce the most deplorable consequences. Will the serious and conscientious part of the public be led to form a favourable opinion of a religious community, by hearing it avowed by her champions, that men had better be suffered eternally to perish than to find salvation out of her pale? Will they not naturally

ask what those *higher ends* can be, in comparison of which the eternal welfare of a large portion of our fellow-creatures is deemed a trifle? Could such a spirit be supposed generally prevalent in the clergy of the established church, it would at once lose all that is sacred in their eyes, and be looked upon as a mere combination to gain possession of power and emolument, under pretence of religion. We are mistaken if much mischief has not already accrued from the indulgence of this spirit. It has envenomed the ill qualities naturally generated by the domination of a party. It has produced serious injury to the church, by imboldening men to appear in her defence who bring nothing into the controversy but overweening pride, ceremonial hypocrisy, and priestly insolence. Haughty, contemptuous airs, a visible disdain of the scruples of tender consciences, and frequently of piety itself, except under one garb and fashion, have been too generally assumed by her champions. These features have given inexpressible disgust to pious and candid minds; hurt, as they well may be, to see a religious community, however numerous or respectable, continually vaunting itself, laying exclusive claims to purity and orthodoxy, and seeming to consider it as a piece of condescension to suffer any other denomination to subsist. They cannot dismiss it from their minds, that humility is a virtue proper to the church as well as to an individual, and that ecclesiastical pride may happen to be as offensive to heaven as pride of any other kind. In the church of Rome these qualities have been ever conspicuous; but finding nothing of this sort, in an equal degree, in any other protestant communion, and recollecting that "the lofty looks of men shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men be made low," one naturally feels some apprehension that they may not pass unpunished, though they are found in the precincts of a cathedral.

Our author derives no satisfaction from the acknowledged success of dissenters in "turning sinners from the error of their way," from an apprehension that their success may eventually prove injurious to the establishment. He pretends to foresee, from this cause, a continual

transfer of hearers from the church to the conventicle. We beg leave to ask the writer, how such a consequence can ensue, but from the superior zeal and piety of sectaries? To suppose, that with only an *equal* share of these qualities, they will be able to make successful inroad on the church, is to abandon the defence of the hierarchy altogether; since this is acknowledging a radical defect in the system, which operates as a dead weight on its exertions, and disqualifies it for maintaining its ground against rivals; that, in short, instead of being the most efficacious mode of exhibiting and impressing revealed truth, it is intrinsically weak and ineffectual. For that system must surely be acknowledged to be so, which is incapable of interesting the people, and which, by rendering public worship less attractive, produces a general preference of a different mode. To suppose this to be the case is to suppose something essentially wrong, which should be immediately examined and corrected. On this supposition the men are acquitted, the system is arraigned. As this, however, is far from being the opinion of the author, the conclusion returns with irresistible force, that a permanent increase of dissenters can *only* arise from their superior piety and zeal. Now, these are really, in our opinion, qualities too valuable to be dispensed with, whatever interest they may obstruct. Regretting, deeply as we may, in common with our author, that they should have formed an alliance so unfortunate, we must still think it better, not only for their possessors, but for the world at large, for them to be found even here than to have no existence at all; and it is upon this point we are at issue with this *conscientious* reformer. For our parts, we are really so old-fashioned and puritanical, that we had rather behold men awakened and converted among dissenters and methodists, than see them sleep the sleep of death in the arms of an establishment.

But our author, it seems, is filled with pious alarm for the cause of *orthodoxy*, from the increasing separation from the church. "By the sound doctrine its instituted "forms express, it will," he tells us, "as long as it stands, "be a witness to the truth, in periods the most barren

" of ministerial qualification; a rallying point to all truly " christian pastors; and *an accredited voucher for the* " *purity of their instruction.*"—P. 17. How much were the primitive christians to be pitied, who were unhappily destitute of any such " voucher;" and had nothing to secure the permanence of truth but the promised presence of Christ, the illumination of the Spirit, and the light of the Scriptures—poor substitutes, undoubtedly, for the solid basis of creeds and formularies! We should readily concur with the author in his views of the security derived from the subscription of articles, if we could forget a few stubborn facts, which we beg leave humbly to recall to his recollection. Is it not a fact, that the nature and extent of the assent and consent signified by subscription have been the subject of a very thorny controversy, in which more ill faith and chicane have been displayed than were ever before known out of the school of the Jesuits; and that the issue of this controversy has been to establish very generally the doctrine of Paley, that none are excluded by it but quakers, papists, and baptists? Is it not a fact, that the press is teeming every week with publications of the most acrimonious description, written by professed churchmen against persons who have incurred this acrimony merely by their attachment to these articles? Is it not a fact, that the doctrines they exhibit are so scorned and detested in this country, that whoever seriously maintains them is stigmatized with the name of " Methodist?" and that that part of the clergy who preach them are *for that reason alone*, more insulted and despised by their brethren than even the dissenters themselves? It is with peculiar effrontery that this author insists on subscription to articles as a sufficient security for the purity of religious instruction, when it is the professed object of his work to recall his contemporaries to that purity. If he means that the " voucher" he speaks of answers its purpose because *it is* credited, he is plainly laughing at the simplicity of the people: if he means to assert it is *entitled* to credit, we must request him to reflect how he can vindicate himself from the charge of " speaking lies in hypocrisy."

A long course of experience has clearly demonstrated the inefficacy of creeds and confessions to perpetuate religious belief. Of this the only faithful depository is, not that which is "written with ink," but on the "fleshly tables of the heart." The spirit of error is too subtle and volatile to be held by such chains. Whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history must know, that public creeds and confessions have occasioned more controversies than they have composed; and that when they ceased to be the subject of dispute they have become antiquated and obsolete. A vast majority of the dissenters of the present day hold precisely the same religious tenets which the puritans did two centuries ago, because it is the instruction they have uniformly received from their pastors; and for the same reason the articles of the national church are almost effaced from the minds of its members, because they have long been neglected or denied by the majority of those who occupy its pulpits. We have never heard of the church of Geneva altering its confession, but we know that Voltaire boasted there was not, in his time, a calvinist in the city; nor have we heard of any proposed amendment in the creed of the Scotch, yet it is certain the doctrines of that creed are preached by a rapidly decreasing minority of the Scottish clergy. From these and similar facts we may conclude, that the doctrines of the church, with or without subscription, are sure to perpetuate themselves where they are faithfully preached; but that the mere circumstance of their being subscribed, will neither secure their being preached nor believed.

"Separatism," says the author, "has no *fixed or perpetual character:* what it is at present, we may, by attentive observation, be able to pronounce; but no human foresight can ascertain what it will be hereafter. Though now, in its numerous chapels, the soundest doctrine should be heard, we have no security that they will not become the schools of heresy. Here, if the licentious teacher get a footing, he moulds the whole system of ministration to his views; not a prayer, not a psalm, not a formulary of any kind, but,

"in this case, will become the vehicle of error."—Pp. 17, 18.

How far, in creatures so liable to mistake, a fixed and perpetual character is an enviable attribute, we shall not stay to inquire; with what right it is claimed on this occasion, it is not very difficult to determine. The Thirty-nine Articles will unquestionably always remain the same; that is, they will always be the Thirty-nine Articles: but it is not quite so certain that they are universally believed; much less, that they will always continue to be so; and least of all, that, after having ceased to be believed, they will receive the sanction of every successive legislature. For our parts, such is our simplicity, that when we read of a fixed and perpetual character, our attention is always wandering to men, to some mode of thinking or feeling to which such perpetuity belongs; instead of resting in the useful contemplation of pen, ink, and paper. With every disposition, however, to do the author justice, we have some fear for the success of his argument; suspecting the dissenters will be ready to reply, 'Our pastors cordially embrace the doctrine contained in your articles; and as this cannot be affirmed of the majority of yours, the question of perpetuity is reduced to this amusing theorem,—In which of two given situations will a doctrine last the longest—where it is believed without being subscribed, or where it is subscribed without being believed?'

The equal justice it is our duty to maintain, obliges us to notice another aspersion which the author casts upon dissenters.

"Every addition Separatism makes to its supporters, "alters the proportion existing in this country between "the monarchical and the democratic spirit; either of "which, preponderating to a considerable degree, might "be productive of the most serious consequences. For "it is certain, that, as our church-establishment is "favourable to monarchy, so is the constitution of our "dissenting congregations to democracy. The latter "principle is cherished in all communities, where the "power resides not in one, or a few, but is shared, in

"certain proportions, among all the members; which is "the case in most of the religious societies under consi-"deration. Let it be remembered, then, that if religion "increase in this way, there is that increasing with it "which is not religion; there is something springing up "which is of a different nature, and which will be sure "to stand, whether that better thing with which it may "grow do or not."—P. 20.

In this statement the author has exhibited his usual inattention to facts. That the people had, in the first ages, a large share in ecclesiastical proceedings, and that their officers were chosen by themselves, is incontrovertibly evident, as well from Scripture as from the authentic monuments of antiquity. The epistles of St. Cyprian, to go no farther, are as full in proof of this point as if they had been written on purpose to establish it. The transfer of power, first from the people to their ministers, and afterwards from them to the Bishop of Rome, was a gradual work, not fully accomplished till many centuries had elapsed from the Christian era. Until the conversion of Constantine, the christian church was an *imperium in imperio*, a spiritual republic, subsisting in the midst of the Roman empire, on which it was completely independent; and its most momentous affairs were directed by popular suffrage. Nor did it in this state, either excite the jealousy or endanger the repose of the civil magistrate; since the distinction betwixt the concerns of this world and those of another, so ably illustrated by Locke, taught the christians of that time to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Instructed to yield obedience to princes for conscience' sake, they were not the less orderly or submissive because they declined their interference in the suppression of error, or the punishment of ecclesiastical delinquency. If there be that inseparable connexion between political disaffection and the exercise of popular rights in religion which this writer contends, the primitive christians must have been in a deplorable state; since it would have been impossible for them to quiet the just apprehensions of government without placing a heathen emperor at the

head of the church. What must we think of the knowledge of a writer who was ignorant of these facts; of the candour which suppressed them; or of the humanity which finds an occasion of aspersing his fellow-christians in what escaped the malignity of heathen persecutors!

The dissenters will not fail to remind the writer, that the British is a mixed, not an absolute monarchy; that the habit of considering the people as nothing is as repugnant to its spirit as that of making them every thing; and that to vest the whole power in the hands of one person, without check or control, is more suited to the genius of the Turkish than of the British government. And to this retort, it must be confessed, the conduct of the high-church party, who have seldom scrupled to promulgate maxims utterly subversive of liberty, would lend a very colourable support. The whole topic, however, is invidious, absurd, and merely calculated to mislead; since the constitution of the christian church is fixed by the will of its Founder, the dictates of which we are not at liberty to accommodate or bend to the views of human policy. The dispute respecting ecclesiastical government must, like every other on religion, be determined, if it ever be determined at all, by an appeal to scripture, illustrated, perhaps, occasionally by the approved usages of the earliest antiquity. To connect political consequences with it, and to make it the instrument of exciting popular odium, is the indication of a bad cause and of a worse heart. After the specimens our readers have already had of the author's spirit, they will not be surprised to find that he is not quite satisfied with the Toleration Act, which he complains, has been perverted from its purpose of affording relief to tender consciences to that of *making* dissenters. We are not acute enough to comprehend this distinction. We have always supposed that it was the intention of the legislature, by that act, to enable protestant dissenters to worship where they pleased, after giving proper notice to the magistrate: how their availing themselves of this liberty can be construed into an abuse of the act, we are at a loss to con-

ceive. This writer would tolerate dissenters, but not allow them to propagate their sentiments; that is, he would permit them the liberty of thinking which none can restrain, but not of speaking and acting, which are alone subject to the operation of law.

It is quite of a piece with the narrow prejudices of such a man, to complain of it as an intolerable hardship, that a minister of the establishment is sometimes in danger, through the undistinguishing spirit of hospitality, of being invited to sit down with religionists of different descriptions: and he avows his manly resolution of going without his dinner rather than expose himself to such an indignity. It is certainly a most lamentable thing to reflect, that a regular clergyman may possibly lose *caste* by mixing at the hospitable board with some of those who will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. When Burke was informed that Mr. Godwin held gratitude to be a crime, he replied, "I will take care not to be accessory to his committing that crime." We hope the lovers of hospitality will take the hint, and never insult the author of "Zeal without Innovation" by exposing him to the touch of the ceremonially unclean.

Although we have already trespassed on the patience of our readers, we cannot dismiss this part of the subject without craving their indulgence a little longer. We are much concerned to witness the spirit of intolerance that pervades many recent publications. If the uniform course of experience can prove any thing, it is, that the extension of any particular frame of church government will of itself contribute little to the interests of vital christianity. Suppose every inhabitant of the kingdom were to return to the bosom of the establishment to-morrow; what real accession would be gained to the kingdom of Christ? Is there any magic in the change of a name, which can convert careless, profane, irreligious dissenters into devout and pious churchmen? The virtuous part of them do honour to the christian profession in the situation they occupy at present; and for the vicious, they could only infect and disgrace the community with which they proposed to associate. What means this incessant struggle

to raise one party on the ruins of another; this assumption of infallibility, and the clamorous demand for the interposition of the legislature, which we so often witness? If the writers to whom we allude will honestly tell us they are apprehensive of their "craft" being in danger, we will give them credit for sincerity; but to attempt to cover their bigotry under a mask of piety, is too gross a deception. Were the measures adopted for which these men are so violent, they would scarcely prove more injurious to religion than to the interests of the established church; to which the accession of numbers would be no compensation for the loss of that activity and spirit which are kept alive by the neighbourhood of rival sects. She would suffer rapid encroachments from infidelity; and the indolence and secularity too incident to opulent establishments would hasten her downfal. Amidst the increasing degeneracy of the clergy, which must be the inevitable effect of destroying the necessity of vigilance and exertion, the people that now crowd the conventicle would not repair to the church: they would be scattered and dissipated, like water no longer confined within its banks. In a very short time, we have not the smallest doubt, the attendance at church would be much less than it is now. A religion which, by leaving no choice, can produce no attachment,—a religion invested with the stern rigour of law, and associated in the public mind, and in public practice, with prisons and pillories and gibbets,—would be a noble match, to be sure, for the subtle spirit of impiety, and the enormous and increasing corruption of the times. It is amusing to reflect what ample elbow-room the worthy rector would possess; how freely he might expatiate in his wide domain; and how much the effect of his denunciations against schism would be heightened by echoing through so large a void.

> "Hic vasto rex Æolus antro
> Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
> Imperio premit."

The Gallican church, no doubt, looked upon it as a signal triumph, when she prevailed on Louis the Four-

teenth to repeal the edict of Nantes, and to suppress the protestant religion. But what was the consequence? Where shall we look, after this period, for her Fenelons and her Pascals—where for the distinguished monuments of piety and learning which were the glory of her better days? As for piety, she perceived she had no occasion for it, when there was no lustre of christian holiness surrounding her; nor for learning, when she had no longer any opponents to confute, or any controversies to maintain. She felt herself at liberty to become as ignorant, as secular, as irreligious as she pleased; and, amidst the silence and darkness she had created around her, she drew the curtains and retired to rest. The accession of numbers she gained by suppressing her opponents, was like the small extension of length a body acquires by death: the feeble remains of life were extinguished, and she lay a putrid corpse, a public nuisance, filling the air with pestilential exhalations. Such, there is every reason to believe, would be the effect of similar measures in England. That union among christians, which it is so desirable to recover, must, we are persuaded, be the result of something more heavenly and divine than legal restraints or angry controversies. Unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the spirit of division is a disease which will never be healed by troubling the waters. We must expect the cure from the increasing prevalence of religion, and from a copious communication of the Spirit, to produce that event. A more extensive diffusion of piety, among all sects and parties, will be the best and only preparation for a cordial union. Christians will then be disposed to appreciate their differences more equitably; to turn their chief attention to points on which they agree; and, in consequence of loving each other more, to make every concession consistent with a good conscience. Instead of wishing to vanquish others, every one will be desirous of being vanquished by the truth. An awful fear of God, and an exclusive desire of discovering his mind, will hold a torch before them in their inquiries, which will strangely illuminate the path in which they are to tread. In the room of being repelled

by mutual antipathy, they will be insensibly drawn nearer to each other by the ties of mutual attachment. A larger measure of the spirit of Christ would prevent them from converting every incidental variation into an impassable boundary; or from condemning the most innocent and laudable usages for fear of symbolizing with another class of christians—an odious spirit with which the writer under consideration is strongly impregnated. The general prevalence of piety in different communities, would inspire that mutual respect, that heartfelt homage for the virtues conspicuous in the character of their respective members, which would urge us to ask with astonishment and regret, Why cannot we be one? What is it that obstructs our union? Instead of maintaining the barrier which separates us from each other, and employing ourselves in fortifying the frontiers of hostile communities, we should be anxiously devising the means of narrowing the grounds of dispute, by drawing the attention of all parties to those fundamental and catholic principles, in which all concur.

To this we may add, that a more perfect subjection to the authority of the great Head of the church would restrain men from inventing new terms of communion, from lording it over conscience, or from exacting a scrupulous compliance with things which the word of God has left indifferent. That sense of imperfection we ought ever to cherish would incline us to be looking up for superior light, and make us think it not improbable that, in the long night which has befallen us, we have all more or less mistaken our way, and have much to learn and much to correct. The very idea of identifying a particular party with the church would be exploded; the foolish clamour about schism hushed; and no one, however mean and inconsiderable, be expected to surrender his conscience to the claims of ecclesiastical dominion. The New Testament is surely not so obscure a book, that, were its contents to fall into the hands of a hundred serious, impartial men, it would produce such opposite conclusions as must necessarily issue in their forming two or more separate communions. It is re-

markable, indeed, that the chief points about which real christians are divided, are points on which that volume is silent—mere human fabrications, which the presumption of men has attached to the christian system. A larger communication of the Spirit of truth would insensibly lead christians into a similar train of thinking; and being more under the guidance of that infallible Teacher, they would gradually tend to the same point, and settle in the same conclusions. Without such an influence as this, the coalescing into one communion would probably be productive of much mischief: it certainly would do no sort of good, since it would be the mere result of intolerance and pride, acting upon indolence and fear.

During the present disjointed state of things, then, nothing remains but for every one to whom the care of any part of the church of Christ is intrusted, to exert himself to the utmost in the promotion of vital religion, in cementing the friendship of the good, and repressing, with a firm and steady hand, the heats and eruptions of party spirit. He will find sufficient employment for his time and his talents in inculcating the great truths of the gospel, and endeavouring to "form Christ" in his hearers, without blowing the flames of contention, or widening that breach which is already the disgrace and calamity of the christian name. Were our efforts uniformly to take this direction, there would be an *identity* in the impression made by religious instruction; the distortion of party features would gradually disappear; and christians would every where approach towards that ideal beauty spoken of by painters, which is combined of the finest lines and traits conspicuous in individual forms. Since they have all drunk into the same spirit, it is manifest nothing is wanting but a larger portion of that spirit, to lay the foundation of a solid, cordial union. It is to the immoderate attachment to secular interest, the love of power, and the want of reverence for truth, not to the obscurities of revelation, we must impute the unhappy contentions among christians—maladies, which nothing can correct

but deep and genuine piety. The true *schismatic* is not so properly the person who declines a compliance with what he judges to be wrong, though he may be mistaken in that judgement, as the man who, like the author before us, sedulously employs every artifice to alienate the affections of good men from each other.

Having animadverted on the illiberality of this writer towards persons of different persuasions, we now proceed to notice his misrepresentations of the state of religion, together with his treatment of that description of the clergy with whom he has been accustomed to associate.

The cause of religion he represents as in a very declining state.

" Some persons now living," he says, " can remember " the time, when absence from church was far from " being so common as it is now become. Then, the " more considerable heads of families were generally " seen in the house of God, with their servants as well " as children. This visible acknowledgement of the " importance of religion had a good effect on families of " inferior condition: the presence of the merchant and " his household brought the tradesman and his family; " and the example of the latter induced his journeymen " and out-door servants to come to church. But this is " not a description of modern habits. In many pews, " once regularly filled by the entire household to which " they belonged, it is now common to see only a small " portion of the family, and often not an individual. " Two or three of the younger branches, from the female " side of the house, occasionally attend, with, perhaps, " the mother, but without the father and the sons: the " father, wearied with business, wants a little relaxa- " tion; and to the young men, not suspecting their " want of instruction, a rural excursion offers some- " thing interesting, while the tranquil service of a church " is too tame an occupation for their unexhausted spirits. " Nor among the few who attend public worship are " they always the same individuals that we see in the " house of God. So that it does not appear to be " from steady principle, and still less from the influ-

" ence of parental authority, that some of the family " are occasionally there. The children are left to them-" selves; they may go to church if they choose to do " so; they incur no displeasure from the father, they " excite no grief in his bosom, if they stay away. " There is no disreputation attaching to absence. It " falls rather upon the contrary conduct; any uniform " attendance on divine worship being frequently consi-" dered a mark of imbecility or demureness.

" To account for the thinness of our parochial con-" gregations, some allege that there is not a sufficient " quantity of naturally attractive circumstances in the " ordinary service of the church. But it is observable, " that where our liturgy is used in its *grandest* form, " the attendance is as far from being numerous as it is " elsewhere. It might be expected, and especially in " an age in which a taste for *music* so generally prevails, " that in a metropolis containing near a million of inha-" bitants, there might be more persons drawn by the " grandeur of cathedral worship to the place where it is " performed, than could well be accommodated in one " church. The cathedral of London, however, pre-" sents no such scene. With a numerous attendance of " ministers, the finest specimens of church-music, " and these performed with that effect which profes-" sional qualification gives to such compositions, the " seats of St. Paul's cathedral are seldom half filled."—Pp. 2—4.

Though we acknowledge the truth of his statement in a great measure, we are far from drawing from it the inference he wishes to impress. Whenever places of worship are thinly attended, at least in the established church, we have uniformly found it to proceed from a cause very distinct from the general decay of piety; it results from the absence of that sort of instruction which naturally engages the attention and fixes the heart. In one view, we are fully aware a great alteration has taken place: an attachment to the mere forms of religion has much subsided; the superstitious reverence formerly paid to consecrated places and a pompous ceremonial

has waxed old; so that nothing will now command a full attendance at places set apart for divine worship but the preaching of the gospel, or of something, at least, that may be mistaken for it. Instead of concurring with the author in considering this as evincing the low state of christianity amongst us, we are disposed to look upon it in a contrary light, being fully convinced that a readiness to acquiesce in the mere forms and ceremonies of religion, to the neglect of that truth which sanctifies the church, is one of the most dangerous errors to which men can be exposed. There is something in the constitution of human nature so abhorrent from the absence of all religion, that we are inclined to believe more are ruined by embracing some counterfeit instead of the true, than by the rejection of true and false altogether. We are not sorry, therefore, to learn, that the music at St. Paul's is not found a sufficient substitute for "the joyful sound," nor a numerous show of ministers accepted by the people, in the room of "Christ crucified set forth before them." Let the truths which concern men's eternal salvation be faithfully taught in that noble edifice, and the complaint of slender attendance will soon cease. In the mean time, of that part of the citizens who might be expected to frequent the cathedral, some are too gay and fashionable not to prefer the music of the theatre and the opera; and some are serious christians, whose hunger for the bread of life will not be satisfied or diverted by the symphonies of an organ, or the splendour of canonical dresses.

He who is resolved to see nothing but what grows in his own inclosure, may report that "all is barren," though the fields around him bloom like the garden of Eden; and such is the strength of this writer's prejudices, that it is morally impossible for him to give a just representation of facts. In forming his estimate of the state of religion, he is resolved to look only where he knows nothing is to be seen; and absurdly complains of the want of a crop where he is conscious the soil has never been cultivated. Effects must be looked for from their natural causes: men do not gather grapes of thorns,

or figs of thistles; nor are the fruits of christianity to be expected in the absence of the gospel. Notwithstanding this writer's gloomy prognostications, we have no doubt of the kingdom of Christ making sensible advances; and, in support of this opinion, we adduce the wider extension of religious truth, the multitude of places where the gospel is preached in its purity, the general disposition to attend it, the establishment of Sunday schools, the circulation, with happy effect, of innumerable tracts, the translation of the Scriptures into foreign languages, and their more extensive communication to all nations, the formation of missionary societies, the growing unanimity among christians, and the prodigious increase of faithful ministers in the established church. We presume these facts may be allowed a degree of weight, sufficient to overbalance the thin attendance at St. Paul's. It is not a little surprising that a writer, who professes to exhibit a correct idea of the religious state of the nation, should pay no attention to these circumstances, or content himself with alluding to them in terms expressive of chagrin and vexation. Regarding the extensive institutions, and the diffusive benefits, which the efforts of serious christians in different connexions have produced, as a contraband article, not entitled to be mentioned in the estimate of our moral worth, he represents us as generally sunk in spiritual sloth and poverty. We should not learn from this writer that attempts were making for the universal propagation of christianity; that translations of the Scriptures were going on in different languages; or that a zeal for the conversion of pagans had occasioned a powerful reaction at home, by producing efforts, hitherto unexampled, toward carrying the gospel into the darkest corners of the kingdom. We should never suspect, from reading his work, that any material alteration had taken place within the last fifty years, or that new life had been infused into the professing world beyond what we might conjecture, perhaps, from certain indirect references and dark insinuations. Without noticing these facts, he calls upon us to join in pathetic lamentations over the pros-

trate state of religion, upon no better ground than the neglect of places of worship where the gospel is *not* preached, and where there is little to attract attention beside the privilege of hearing *fine music* and seeing *fine ministers* for nothing. It is a consolation to us to be convinced that the state of things is much otherwise than he represents; that more persons are brought acquainted with the glad tidings of the gospel, and more minds penetrated with the concerns of eternity, than at any period since the Reformation.

Thus far we dispute the justice of this author's statement, and are disposed to question the truth of the inference he has drawn from some insulated facts. But this is not the only fault we have to find with this part of his work. He has not only, in our opinion, been betrayed into erroneous conclusions, but has utterly failed in catching the distinguishing features in the aspect of the times; so that his picture bears no sort of resemblance to the original. He has painted nothing; he has only given an account of a particular distortion or two; so that a foreigner would no more be able, by reading his work, to form an idea of the state of religion in England, than of a countenance he had never seen, by being told its chin was too long, or its nostrils were too wide. It must be evident to every one, that the most striking characteristic of the present times, is the violent, the outrageous opposition that is made to religion by multitudes, and the general disposition in the members of the community to take a decided part. To this circumstance the writer has never adverted. It is impossible to suppose it could escape his attention: we must therefore impute his silence to the well-weighed dictates of prudence, which admonished him of the possibility of betraying himself into inconveniences by such a discussion: nor need we be surprised, notwithstanding his boasted magnanimity, at his yielding to these suggestions; since his magnanimity is of that sort, which makes a man very ready to insult his brethren, but very careful not to disgust his superiors. As we are happily exempt from these scruples, we shall endeavour, in as few words as

possible, to put the reader in possession of our ideas on this subject.

The leading truths of revelation were all along retained in the church of Rome, but buried under such a mass of absurd opinions and superstitious observances, that they drew but little attention, and exerted a very inconsiderable influence in the practical application of the system. At the Reformation, they were effectually extricated and disengaged from errors with which they had been mingled, were presented in a blaze of light, and formed the basis of our national creed. As it was by pushing them to their legitimate consequences that the Reformers were enabled to achieve the conquest of popery, they were for a while retained in their purity, and every deviation from them denounced as menacing a revolt to the enemy. The Articles of the church were a real transcript of the principles the Reformers were most solicitous to inculcate; and, being supported by the mighty impulse which produced the Reformation, while that remained fresh and unbroken they constituted the real faith of the people. Afterwards they underwent an eclipse in the protestant church of England, as they had done in the church of Rome, though from causes somewhat different. The low arminianism and intolerant bigotry of Laud paved the way for a change, which was not a little aided and advanced by the unbounded licentiousness and profligacy which overspread the kingdom after the Restoration: for it must be remembered that there is an intimate connexion between the perception and relish of truth and a right disposition of mind; that they have a reciprocal influence on each other; and that the mystery of faith can only be placed with safety in a pure conscience. When lewdness, profaneness, and indecency, reigned without control, and were practised without a blush, nothing, we may be certain, could be more repugnant to the prevailing taste, than the unadulterated word of God. There arose also, at that time, a set of divines who, partly in compliance with the popular humour, partly to keep at a distance from the puritans, and partly to gain the infidels, who then began to make

their appearance, introduced a new sort of preaching, in which the doctrines of the Reformation, as they are usually styled, were supplanted by copious and elaborate disquisitions on points of morality. Their fame and ability imboldened their successors to improve upon their pattern, by consigning the Articles of the church to a still more perfect oblivion, by losing sight still more entirely of the peculiarities of the gospel, guarding more anxiously against every sentiment or expression that could agitate or alarm, and by shortening the length, and adding as much as possible to the dryness, of their moral lucubrations. From that time, the idea commonly entertained in England of a perfect sermon, was that of a discourse upon some moral topic, clear, correct, and argumentative, in the delivery of which the preacher must be free from all suspicion of being moved himself, or of intending to produce emotions in his hearers; or in a word, as remote as possible from such a mode of reasoning on righteousness, temperance, and judgement, as should make a Felix tremble. This idea was very successfully realized, this singular model of pulpit eloquence carried to the utmost perfection; so that, while the bar, the parliament, and the theatre, frequently agitated and inflamed their respective auditories, the church was the only place where the most feverish sensibility was sure of being laid to rest. This inimitable apathy in the mode of imparting religious instruction, combined with the utter neglect of whatever is most touching or alarming in the discoveries of the gospel, produced their natural effect of extinguishing devotion in the established church, and of leaving it to be possessed by the dissenters; of whom it was considered as the distinguishing badge, and from that circumstance derived an additional degree of unpopularity. From these causes the people gradually became utterly alienated from the Articles of the church, eternal concerns dropped out of the mind, and what remained of religion was confined to an attention to a few forms and ceremonies. If any exception can be made to the justice of these observations, it respects the doctrines of the Trinity and the atone-

ment, which were often defended with ability, though in a dry and scholastic manner, and the discussion of which served to mark the return of the principal festivals of the church; while other points not less important,—such as the corruption of human nature, the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith,—were either abandoned to oblivion, or held up to ridicule and contempt. The consequence was, that the creed established by law had no sort of influence in forming the sentiments of the people; the pulpit completely vanquished the desk; piety and puritanism were confounded in one common reproach; an almost pagan darkness in the concerns of salvation prevailed; and the English became the most irreligious people upon earth.

Such was the situation of things, when Whitfield and Wesley made their appearance; who, whatever failings the severest criticism can discover in their character, will be hailed by posterity as the second Reformers of England. Nothing was farther from the views of these excellent men, than to innovate in the established religion of their country; their sole aim was to recall the people to the good old way, and to imprint the doctrine of the Articles and Homilies on the spirits of men. But this doctrine had been confined so long to a dead letter, and so completely obliterated from the mind by contrary instruction, that the attempt to revive it met with all the opposition which innovation is sure to encounter, in addition to what naturally results from the nature of the doctrine itself, which has to contend with the whole force of human corruption. The revival of the old appeared like the introduction of a new religion; and the hostility it excited was less sanguinary, but scarcely less virulent, than that which signalized the first publication of christianity. The gospel of Christ, or that system of truth which was laid as the foundation of the Reformation, has since made rapid advances; and, in every step of its progress, has sustained the most furious assault. Great Britain exhibits the singular spectacle of two parties contending, not whether christianity shall be received or rejected, but whether it shall be allowed to

retain any thing spiritual: not whether the Articles and Homilies shall be repealed, but whether they shall be laid as the basis of public instruction. Infidelity being too much discredited by the atrocities in France, to hope for public countenance, the enemies of religion, instead of attacking the outworks of christianity, are obliged to content themselves with vilifying and misrepresenting its distinguishing doctrines. They are willing to retain the christian religion, providing it continue inefficient; and are wont to boast of their attachment to the established church, when it is manifest there is little in it they admire, except its splendour and its emoluments. The clerical order, we are sorry to say, first set the example; and, since evangelical principles have been more widely diffused, have generally appeared in the foremost ranks of opposition. This is nothing more than might be naturally looked for. With all the respect we feel for the clergy, on account of their learning and talents, it is impossible not to know that many of them are mere men of the world, who have consequently the same objections to the gospel as others, together with some peculiar to themselves. As the very attempt of reviving doctrines which have been obliterated through their neglect, implies a tacit censure of their measures, so, wherever that attempt succeeds, it diminishes the weight of their ecclesiastical character. Deserted by the people, and eclipsed in the public esteem by many much their inferiors in literary attainments, they feel indignant: and if, as we will suppose, they sometimes suspect their being neglected has arisen from their inattention to important truths and indispensable duties, this increases their uneasiness, which, if it fails to reform, will inevitably exasperate them still more against those who are the innocent occasions of it. It is but fair to acknowledge, that, in conducting the controversy, they have generally kept within decent bounds, have often reasoned where others have railed, and have usually abstained from topics hackneyed by infidels and scoffers. But they cannot be vindicated from the charge of having, by a formal opposition to the gospel, inflamed the irreligious prejudices of the age, ob-

structed the work they were appointed to promote, and imboldened others, who had none of their scruples or restraints, to outrage piety itself. The dragon has cast from his mouth such a flood of heresy and mischief, that Egypt, in the worst of her plagues, was not covered with more loathsome abominations. Creatures, which we did not suspect to have existed, have come forth from their retreats, some soaring into the regions of impiety on vigorous pinions, others crawling on the earth with a slow and sluggish motion, only to be tracked through the filthy slime of their impurities. We have seen writers of every order, from the Polyphemuses of the north to the contemptible dwarfs of the Critical Review; men of every party, infidels, churchmen, and dissenters, — a motley crew, who have not one thing in common, except their antipathy to religion,—join hands and heart on this occasion: a deadly taint of impiety has blended them in one mass; as things the most discordant, while they are *living* substances, will do perfectly well to putrefy together.

We are not at all alarmed at this extensive combination; we doubt not of its producing the most happy effects. It has arisen from the alarm the great enemy has felt at the extension of the gospel; and, by drawing the attention of the world more powerfully to it, will ultimately aid the cause it is intended to subvert. The public will not long be at a loss to determine where the truth lies, when they see in one party a visible fear of God, a constant appeal to his oracles, a solicitude to promote the salvation of mankind; in the other, an indecent levity, an unbridled insolence, an unblushing falsehood, a hard unfeeling pride, a readiness to adopt any principles and assume any mask that will answer their purpose, together with a manifest aim to render the Scriptures of no authority, and religion of no effect.

Having so often alluded to the "evangelical clergy," we shall close this division of our remarks with exhibiting a slight outline of the doctrines by which the clergy of this class are distinguished. The term *evangelical* was first given them, simply on account of their preach-

ing the gospel, or, in other words, their exhibiting with clearness and precision the peculiar truths of christianity. In every system there are some principles which serve to identify it, and in which its distinguishing essence consists. In the system of christianity, the rules of moral duty are not entitled to be considered in this light, partly because they are not peculiar to it, and partly because they are retained by professed infidels, who avow, without scruple, their admiration of the morality of the gospel. We must look, then, elsewhere, for the distinguishing character of christianity. It must be sought for in its doctrines, and, as its professed design is to conduct men to eternal happiness, in those doctrines which relate to the way of salvation, or the method of a sinner's reconciliation with God. There are some, we are aware, who would reduce the whole faith of a christian to a belief of the Messiahship of Christ, without reflecting that, until we have fixed some specific ideas to the term Messiah, the proposition which affirms him to be such contains no information. The most discordant apprehensions are entertained by persons who equally profess that belief; some affirming him to be a mere man, others a being of the angelic order, and a third party that he essentially partakes of the divine nature. The first of these look upon his sufferings as merely exemplary; the last, as propitiatory and vicarious. It must be evident, then, from these views being at the utmost distance from each other, that the proposition that Christ is the Messiah conveys little information, while the import of its principal term is left vague and undetermined. The socinian and trinitarian, notwithstanding their verbal agreement, having a different object of worship, and a different ground of confidence, must be allowed to be of different religions. It requires but a very cursory perusal of the Articles of the established church, to determine to which of these systems *they* lend *their* support: or to perceive that the Deity of Christ, the doctrine of atonement for sin, the guilt and apostacy of man, and the necessity of the agency of the Spirit to restore the divine image, are asserted by them in terms the most clear and unequivocal.

This question stands quite independent of the calvinistic controversy. Are the clergy, styled evangelical, to be blamed for preaching *these* doctrines? Before this can be allowed, the Articles must be cancelled by the same authority by which they were established; or it must be shown how it consists with integrity, to gain an introduction to the church by signifying an unfeigned assent and consent to certain articles of religion, with the intention of immediately banishing them from notice. The clamour against the clergy in question cannot, without an utter contempt of decency, be excited by the mere fact of their being known to hold and inculcate these doctrines; but by the manner of their teaching them, or the exclusive attention they are supposed to pay them, to the neglect of other parts of the system. The measure of zeal they display for them, they conceive to be justified, as well by a view of the actual state of human nature, as by the express declaration of the inspired oracles. Conceiving, with the compilers of the Articles, that the state of man is that of a fallen and apostate creature, they justly conclude that a mere code of morals is inadequate to his relief; that, having lost the favour of God by his transgression, he requires, not merely to be instructed in the rules of duty, but in the method of regaining the happiness he has forfeited: that the pardon of sin, or some compensation to divine justice for the injury he has done to the majesty of the supreme Lawgiver, are the objects which ought, in the first place, to occupy his attention. An acquaintance with the rules of duty may be sufficient to teach an innocent creature how to secure the felicity he possesses, but can afford no relief to a guilty conscience, nor instruct the sinner how to recover the happiness he has lost. Let it be remembered, that christianity is essentially a restorative dispensation; it bears a continual respect to a state from which man is fallen, and is a provision for repairing that ruin which the introduction of moral evil has brought upon him. Exposed to the displeasure of God and the curse of his law, he stands in need of a Redeemer; disordered in his powers, and criminally averse to his duty, he equally needs a Sanctifier.

As adapted to such a situation, much of the New Testament is employed in displaying the character and unfolding the offices of both, with a view of engaging him to embrace that scheme of mercy which the divine benignity has thought fit to exhibit in the gospel. The intention of St. John, in composing the evangelical history, coincides with the entire purpose and scope of revelation: "These things are written," said he, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." Whoever considers that, upon every hypothesis except the socinian, christianity is a provision of mercy for an apostate and sinful world, through a divine Mediator, will acknowledge that something more is included in the idea of preaching the gospel, than the inculcation of moral duties; and that he who confines his attention to these, exchanges the character of a christian pastor for that of a fashionable declaimer, or a philosophical moralist. If we turn our eyes to the ministry of the apostles, we perceive it to have consisted in "testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:" repentance, which is natural religion modified by the circumstances of a fallen creature, including a return to the path of duty; and faith, which is a practical compliance with the christian dispensation, by receiving the Saviour as "the way, the truth, and the life." Faith and repentance being the primary duties enjoined under the gospel, and the production of these the professed end of the inspired writers, we need not wonder that those who are ambitious to tread in their steps, insist much, in the course of their ministry, on the topics which supply the principal motives to these duties; the evil of sin, the extent of human corruption, together with the dignity, power, and grace of the Redeemer. Remembering that the object of repentance is God, they do not, in treating of sin, satisfy themselves with displaying its mischievous effects in society: they expatiate on its contrariety to the divine nature; they speak of it chiefly as an affront offered to the authority of the Supreme Ruler; and represent no repentance as genuine which springs not from godly

sorrow, or a concern for having displeased God. In this part of their office they make use of the moral law, which requires the devotion of the whole heart and unfailing obedience, as the sword of the Spirit, to pierce the conscience and to convince men that "by the deeds of it no flesh living can be justified, but that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." The uniform course of experience serves to convince them, that, till a deep impression of this truth be made on the heart, the character of the Saviour, and the promise of pardon through his blood, will produce no gratitude, and excite no interest. In inculcating faith in Christ, they cannot satisfy themselves with merely exhibiting the evidences of christianity; a mere assent to which, upon historical grounds, undeniably fails, in innumerable instances, of producing those effects which are uniformly ascribed to that principle in the New Testament; neither overcoming the world, nor purifying the heart, nor inducing newness of life. They are of opinion that the external evidences of the christian religion are chiefly of importance, on account of their tendency to fix the attention on Christ, the principal object exhibited in that dispensation; and the faith on which the Scriptures lay so much stress, and connect with such ineffable benefits, they conceive essentially to involve a personal reliance on Christ for salvation, accompanied with a cordial submission to his authority. Attempting to produce this scriptural faith, in a dependence upon the divine blessing, (without which the best means will be unsuccessful,) they dwell much on the dignity of his character as the Son of God, the admirable constitution of his person as "Immanuel, God with us," the efficacy of his atonement, and the gracious tenour of his invitations, together with the agency of that Spirit which is entrusted to him as the Mediator, to be imparted to the members of his mystical body. In their view, to preach the Gospel is to preach Christ; they perceive the New Testament to be full of him: and while they imbibe that spirit with which it is replete, they feel a sacred ambition to diffuse "the savour of his name in every place."

Let it not be inferred from hence, that they are inattentive to the interests of practical religion, or that their ministry is merely occupied in explaining and enforcing a doctrinal system. None lay more stress on the duties of a holy life, or urge with more constancy the necessity of their hearers showing their faith by their works; and they are incessantly affirming, with St. James, that the former without the latter "is dead, being alone." Though, in common with the inspired writers, they ascribe their transition from a state of death to a state of justification solely to faith in Christ previous to good works actually performed, yet they equally insist upon a performance of those works as the evidence of justifying faith; and, supposing life to be spared, as the indispensable condition of final happiness. The law, not altered in its requirements, (for what was once duty they conceive to be duty still,) but attempered in its sanctions to the circumstances of a fallen creature, they exhibit as the perpetual standard of rectitude, as the sceptre of majesty by which the Saviour rules his disciples. They conceive it to demand the same things, though not with the same rigour, under the gospel dispensation as before. The matter of duty they look upon as unalterable, and the only difference to be this; that, whereas, under the covenant of works, the condition of life was sinless obedience, under the new covenant, an obedience sincere and affectionate, though imperfect, is accepted for the sake of the Redeemer. At the same time they do not cease to maintain, that the faith which they hold to be justifying comprehends in it the seminal principle of every virtue; that if genuine, it will not fail to be fruitful; and that a christian has it in his power to show his faith "*by his works*," and by no other means. Under a full conviction of the fallen state of man, together with his moral incapacity to do what is pleasing to God, they copiously insist on the agency of the Spirit, and affectionately urge their hearers to implore his gracious assistance. From *no class* of men will you hear more solemn warnings against sin, more earnest calls to repentance, or more full and distinct delineations of the duties resulting from every

relation in life, accompanied with a peculiar advantage of drawing from the mysteries of the gospel the strongest motives to strengthen the abhorrence of the one, and enforce the practice of the other. In their hands, morality loses nothing but the pagan air with which it is too often invested. The morality which they enjoin is of heavenly origin, the pure emanation of truth and love, sprinkled with atoning blood, and baptized into an element of christian sanctity. That they are not indifferent to the interests of virtue is sufficiently apparent, from the warm approbation they uniformly express of the excellent work of Mr. Wilberforce, which is not more conspicuous for the orthodoxy of its tenets than for the purity and energy of its moral instruction. If we look at the effects produced from the ministry of these men, they are such as might be expected to result from a faithful exhibition of the truth of God. Wherever they labour, careless sinners are awakened, profligate transgressors are reclaimed, the mere form of religion is succeeded by the power, and fruits of genuine piety appear in the holy and exemplary lives of their adherents. A visible reformation in society at large, and, in many instances, unequivocal proofs of solid conversion, attest the purity of their doctrines and the utility of their labours; effects which we challenge their enemies to produce where a different sort of teaching prevails.

The controversy between them and their opponents, to say the truth, turns on a point of the greatest magnitude: the question at issue respects the choice of a supreme end, and whether we will take "the Lord to be our God." Their opponents are for confining religion to an acknowledgement of the being of a God and the truth of the christian revelation, accompanied with some external rites of devotion, while the world is allowed the exclusive dominion of the heart; *they* are for carrying into effect the apostolic mission by summoning men to repentance, and engaging them to an entire surrender of themselves to the service of God through a Mediator. In the system of human life, their opponents assign to devotion a very narrow and limited agency: *they* contend

for its having the supreme control. The former expect nothing from religion but the restraint of outward enormities by the fear of future punishment; in the views of the latter, it is productive of positive excellence, a perennial spring of peace, purity, and joy. Instead of regarding it as a matter of occasional reference, they consider it as a principle of constant operation. While their opponents always overlook, and frequently deny, the specific difference between the church and the world; in *their* views the christian is a pilgrim and stranger in the earth, one whose heart is in heaven, and who is supremely engaged in the pursuit of eternal realities. Their fiercest opposers, it is true, give to Jesus Christ the title of the Saviour of the world; but it requires very little attention to perceive, that their hope of future happiness is placed on the supposed preponderancy of the virtues over the vices, and the claims which they then conceive to result on the *justice* of God; while the opposite party consider themselves as mere pensioners on *mercy*, flee for refuge to the cross, and ascribe their hopes of salvation entirely to the grace of the Redeemer.

For our parts, supposing the being and perfections of God once ascertained, we can conceive of no point at which we can be invited to stop, short of that serious piety and habitual devotion which the evangelical clergy enforce. To live without religion, to be devoid of habitual devotion, is natural and necessary in him who disbelieves the existence of its object; but upon what principles he can justify his conduct, who professes to believe in a Deity, without aiming to please him in all things, without placing his happiness in his favour, we are utterly at a loss to comprehend.

We cannot dismiss this part of the subject without remarking the exemplary moderation of the clergy of this class on those intricate points which unhappily divide the christian church; the questions, we mean, that relate to predestination and free-will, on which, equally remote from pelagian heresy and antinomian licentiousness, they freely tolerate and indulge a diversity of opinion, embracing calvinists and arminians with little distinction,

provided the calvinism of the former be practical and moderate, and the arminianism of the latter evangelical and devout. The greater part of them lean, we believe, to the doctrine of general redemption, and love to represent the gospel as bearing a friendly aspect toward the eternal happiness of all to whom it is addressed; but they are much less anxious to establish a polemical accuracy than to "win souls to Christ."

The opposition they encounter from various quarters will not surprise those who reflect that "they are not of the world," that "the world loves only its own," and naturally feels a dislike to such as testify that its works are evil. The christianity of the greater part of the community is merely nominal: and it necessarily follows, that wherever the truths of religion are faithfully exhibited and practically exemplified, they will be sure to meet with the same friends and the same enemies as at their first promulgation; they will be still exposed to assault from the prejudices of unrenewed minds, they will be upheld by the same almighty power, and will continue to insinuate themselves into the hearts of the simple and sincere with the same irresistible force.

We hope our readers will excuse the length to which we have extended our delineation of the principles of the clergy styled "evangelical," reflecting how grossly they have been misrepresented, and that until the subject is placed fairly and fully in view, it is impossible to form an equitable judgement of the treatment they have met with from the writer under consideration.

The first charge he adduces against the evangelical clergy is that of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, according to Mr. Locke, is that state of mind which disposes a person to give a stronger assent to a religious proposition than the evidence will justify. According to the more common and popular notion, it implies a pretence to supernatural communications, on which is founded a belief in certain doctrines, and the performance of certain actions, which the Scriptures have not authorized or revealed—a dangerous delusion, as it tends to disannul the standard of religion, and by the extravagancies and follies it produces,

to bring piety into disgrace. We hold enthusiasm in as much abhorrence as our author does; but we ask, what is the proportion of the evangelical clergy who are guilty of it? and for *every* individual amongst them to whom it attaches, we will engage to produce *ten* amongst their opponents who are deficient in the essential branches of *morality*. Yet we should esteem it extreme illiberality in a writer to brand the clergy in general with immorality. There may be some few, among the many hundreds whom the author has undertaken to describe, who are real enthusiasts; but where is the candour or justice of mingling this feature in the delineation of the body? We appeal to the religious public, whether they are not, on the contrary, eminently conspicuous for their close adherence "to the law and to the testimony," and for their care to enjoin nothing on their hearers without direct warrant from the Bible? If every one is to be charged with enthusiasm whose piety is of a more fervid complexion than the accuser is disposed to sympathize with, or can readily account for, we must indeed despair of convincing this writer of the futility of his allegation. They have the *zeal*, which, to him who makes what is most prevalent in the church his model, *must* look like *innovation*.

He frequently insinuates that there is a disposition in them to symbolize with the dissenters, though he had allowed, at the very outset of his work, that they most strictly conform to the prescribed ritual, have no scruples against canonical obedience, and are most firmly attached to the ecclesiastical constitution. Speaking of the established church, he says—

"They (the evangelical clergy) approve, they admire "the church in which they serve. They rejoice in "being ministers of such a church. Instead of being "indifferent to its continuance, their devoutest wish is, "that it may stand firm on its basis. They consider it "as the greatest of blessings to their country. They "observe, with no little anxiety, separatism gaining "ground upon it. And this, not from an invidious "principle, but because hereby an alienation, *in per-*

" *petuity*, is produced in many minds, from a constitution " which they consider as best providing for the universal " conveyance and permanent publication of christian " truth. Its continuance they likewise consider as the " surest pledge of religious liberty to all who wish for " that blessing. And in this view they pity the short- " sightedness of those religious persons, who forward any " measures which make against the stability of the na- " tional church. They view them as men undermining the " strongest bulwark of *their own* security and comfort, and " conceive that protestant sects, of every name, however " they might prefer their own modes of religion, would de- " voutly pray for the support and prosperity of the church " of England, as it now stands: ' *Sua si bona norint.*' In " short, the ecclesiastical establishment of this country is, " in their views, what ' the ark of God' was in the estima- " tion of the pious Israelite; and ' their hearts tremble' " more for that, than for any thing else, the stability of " which may seem to be endangered in these eventful times. " They would consider its fall as one of the heaviest " judgements that could befall the nation."—Pp. 128, 129.

Any such approach to the dissenters as is inconsistent with their professional engagements is incompatible with the truth of this testimony. But let us go on to notice another imputation.

" I am constantly," says the author, " ready to admit " that there is a great deal of truth in what is often " alleged by their opponents; namely, that under their " preaching there has arisen an unfavourable opinion of " the body of the clergy. To excite a hatred of what is " evil, is, undoubtedly, one purpose of christian instruc- " tion. But while the preacher is attempting this, he must " take care that he do not call forth the malignant passions. " This he is almost sure to do, if he point out a certain " set of men, as persons to whom his reprehensions par- " ticularly apply. The hearers, too generally apt to for- " get themselves, are drawn still further from the con- " sideration of their own faults, when they can find a " defined class of men, on whom they can fasten the " guilt of any alleged error; on them they will dis-

"charge their gall, and mistake their rancour for *righteous-*
"*ness.*"—Pp. 154, 155, *Second Edition.*

Two questions arise on this point: first, how far an unfavourable opinion of the body of the clergy is just; and secondly, what sort of influence the evangelical party have had in producing it. "The clergy, as a body," the author complains, "are considered by them and their "adherents as men who do not preach the gospel." If we understand him, he means to assert that the clergy, as a body, *do* preach the gospel: for we cannot suspect him of being so ridiculous as to complain of their being considered in their just and true light. Here we have the very singular spectacle of gospel ministers exclaiming with bitterness against some of their brethren for preaching the doctrines of the new birth, justification by faith, the internal operations of the Spirit, and whatever else characterised the faith of the reformers, which we have the satisfaction of learning, from this most liberal writer, are no parts of the gospel. Or, if he demur in assenting to such a proposition, it is incumbent on him to explain what are the *doctrines distinct* from those we have mentioned, the inculcation of which has excited the opposition of the clergy. We, in our great simplicity, supposed that the ministers styled evangelical had been opposed for insisting on points intimately related to the gospel; but we are now taught, from high authority, that the controversy is entirely of another kind, and relates to subjects, with respect to which the preachers of the gospel may indifferently arrange themselves on either side. We are under great obligations to our author for clearing up this perplexing affair, and so satisfactorily showing both parties they were fighting in the dark. Poor George Whitfield! how much to be pitied! who exhausted himself with incredible labours, and endured a storm of persecution, in communicating religious instruction to people who were already furnished with more than ten thousand preachers of the gospel! To be serious, however, on a subject which, if there be one in the world, demands seriousness,—it is an incontrovertible fact, that the doctrines of the Reformation are no longer heard in the

greater part of the established pulpits, and that there has been a general departure from the truths of the gospel, which are exhibited in the ministry of a small, though increasing, minority of the clergy. The author *knows* this to be a fact, although he has the meanness to express himself in a manner that would imply his being of a contrary opinion. We wish him all the consolation he can derive from this trait of godly simplicity, as well as from his reflection on the effect which his flattery is likely to produce, in awakening the vigilance, and improving the character, of his newly-discovered race of gospel ministers. With respect to the degree in which an unfavourable opinion of the clergy is to be ascribed to the representations of the evangelical party, we have to remark, that they possess too much attachment to their order to delight in depreciating it; and that they are under no temptation to attempt it with a view to secure the preference of their hearers; who, supposing them to have derived benefit from their labours, will be sufficiently aware of the difference between light and darkness, between famine and plenty. Were they to insinuate, with this author, that all their clerical brethren are actually engaged in the same cause, and are promoting the same object with themselves, they would at once be charged with a violation of truth, and be considered as insulting the common sense of the public.

The author is extremely offended at Dr. Haweis, on account of the following passage in his History of the Church of Christ. "Different itinerant societies have been established in order to send instruction to the poor, in the villages where the gospel is not preached. Probably not less than five hundred places of divine worship have been opened within the last three years." Dr. Haweis, in making this representation, undoubtedly conceived himself to be stating a simple fact, without suspecting any lover of the gospel would call it in question. The author's comment upon it is curious enough. "It would "be scarcely credible," he says, "were not the time and "place marked with sufficient precision, that a clergyman, "beneficed in the Church of England, was describing, in

"the foregoing passage, something which had lately been "taking place in this country!" It is surely very credible that there are five hundred places in England where the gospel is not preached; the incredible part of the business, then, consists in a "beneficed clergyman" daring to assert it, who, according to the author, is a sort of personage who is bound never to utter a truth that will offend the delicate ears of the clergy, especially on so trivial an occasion as that of describing the state of religion in England. What a magnanimity of spirit, and how far is this author from the suspicion of being a man-pleaser!

After acknowledging that the ministers he is characterizing have been *unjustly* charged with infringing on canonical regularity, he adds,

"Would it were as easy to defend them *universally*,* "against those who accuse them of vanity, of courting "popularity, of effrontery, of coarseness, of the want of "that affectionate spirit which should breathe through "all the ministrations of a christian teacher, of their "commonly appearing before a congregation with an "objurgatory aspect, as if their minds were always "brooding over some matter of accusation against their "charge, instead of their feeling towards them as a father "does toward his children."—P. 157.

The reader has, in this passage, a tolerable specimen of the "vanity" and "effrontery" of this writer, as well as of that "objurgatory aspect" he has thought fit to assume toward his brethren, not without strong suspicion of assuming it from a desire to "court popularity." It would be a mere waste of words to attempt to reply to such an accusation, which merits attention on no other account than its exhibiting a true picture of his mind.

"As for the matter," he proceeds to observe, "of which "the sermons delivered by some of them are composed, "it is contemptible in the extreme. Though truths of "great importance are brought forward, yet, as if those "who delivered them were born to ruin the cause in "which they are engaged, they are presented to the

* The word *universally*, marked in italics, was inserted *after* the first edition.

"auditory, associated with such meanness, imbecility, or "absurdity, as to afford a complete triumph to those who "are adverse to their propagation. We are disgusted "by the violation of all the rules, which the common "sense of mankind teaches them to expect the observ- "ance of on the occasion. It is true, indeed, that some- "thing is heard about Christ, about faith and repentance, "about sin and grace; but in vain we look for argument, "or persuasion, or suavity, or reverential demeanour; "qualities which ought never to be absent, where it is "of the utmost importance that the judgement be con- "vinced, and the affections gained."—P. 158.

Unfair and illiberal in the extreme as this representation is, it contains an important concession,—that the lowest preachers among them have the wisdom to make a right selection of topics, and to bring forward truths of great importance; a circumstance sufficient of itself to give them an infinite superiority over the "apes of Epictetus."* A great diversity of talents must be expected to be found amongst them; but it has not been our lot to hear of any, whose labours a good man would think it right to treat with indiscriminate contempt. As they are called, for the most part, to address the middle and lower classes of society, their language is plain and simple: speaking in the presence of God, their address is solemn: and, as becomes "the ambassadors of Christ," their appeals to the conscience are close and cogent. Few, if any, among them, aspire to the praise of consummate orators—a character which we despair of ever seeing associated, in high perfection, with that of a christian teacher. The minister of the gospel is called "to declare the testimony of God," which is always weakened by a profuse employment of the ornaments of secular eloquence. Those exquisite paintings and nice touches of art, in which the sermons of the French preachers excel so much, excite a kind of attention, and produce a species of pleasure, not in perfect accordance with devotional feeling. The imagination is too much excited and employed, not to interfere with the more awful functions of

* Horsley.

conscience; the hearer is absorbed in admiration; and the exercise which ought to be an instrument of conviction, becomes a feast of taste. In the hand of a Massillon, the subject of death itself is blended with so many associations of the most delicate kind, and calls up so many sentiments of natural tenderness, as to become a source of theatrical amusement, rather than of religious sensibility. Without being insensible to the charms of eloquence, it is our decided opinion that a sermon of Mr. Gisborne's is more calculated to "convert a sinner from the error of his way," than one of Massillon's. It is a strong objection to a studied attempt at oratory in the pulpit, that it usually induces a neglect of the peculiar doctrines of christian verity, where the preacher feels himself restrained, and is under the necessity of explaining texts, of obviating objections, and elucidating difficulties, which limits the excursions of imagination, and confines it within narrow bounds. He is, therefore, eager to escape from these fetters; and, instead of "*reasoning out of the Scriptures*," expatiates in the flowery fields of declamation. It would be strange, however, if the evangelical clergy did not excel their contemporaries in the art of preaching, to which they devote so much more of their attention. While others are accustomed to describe it under the very appropriate phrase of "doing duty," it is their business and their delight. They engage in it under many advantages. Possessed of the same education with their brethren, they usually speak to crowded auditories; the truths they deliver command attention; and they are accustomed to ascend the pulpit under an awful sense of the weight and importance of their charge. Under such circumstances, it is next to impossible for them not to become powerful and impressive. Were it not indelicate to mention names, we could easily confirm our observations by numerous living examples. Suffice it to say, that perhaps no denomination of christians ever produced so many excellent preachers; and that it is entirely owing to them, that the ordinance of preaching has not fallen, in the established church, into utter contempt.

With respect to the remarks the author makes on the "hypochondriacal cast of preaching heard among them," of their "holding their hearers by details of conflicts and experiences," and of their "*prosings* on the hidings of God's face,"* we need not detain our readers. To good men it will be matter of serious regret, to find a writer, from whom different things were to be expected, treat the concerns of the spiritual warfare in so light and ludicrous a manner; while the irreligious will heartily join in the laugh. It should be remembered that he is performing quarantine, purging himself from the suspicion of *methodism*, and that nothing can answer this purpose so well as a spice of profaneness.

After expressing his contempt of the evangelical clergy as *preachers*, he proceeds to characterise them in the following manner as *writers* :—

"Here," says he, "I can with great truth affirm, that "many included in that description of clergymen now "under consideration are sorely grieved, by much of "what comes out as the produce of authorship on their "side. And well they may be; to see, as is frequently "the case, the blessed truths of the gospel degraded, by "being associated with newspaper bombast, with impu-"dence, with invective, with dotage, with drivelling cant, "with buffoonery, and scurrility! Who can read these "despicable publications, without thinking contempt-"uously of all who abet them? But let not every one, "in whom an occasional coincidence of opinion may be "recognised, be included in this number. For it is a "certain truth, that the writings of avowed infidels are "not more offensive to several of the clergy in question, "than are some of the publications here alluded to. "Let them not, therefore, be judged of by that which "they condemn; by productions which they consider as "an abuse of the liberty of the press, and a disgrace to "the cause which their authors profess to serve."—P. 179.

Whoever remembers that the most learned interpreter of prophecy now living ranks with the evangelical clergy,

* In the second edition, the author has changed the term "*prosings*" into "*discoursings*."

whoever recalls to his recollection the names of Scott, Robinson, Gisborne, and a multitude of others of the same description, will not easily be induced to form a contemptuous opinion of their literary talents, or to suspect them of being a whit behind the rest of the clergy in mental cultivation or intellectual vigour. In a subsequent edition, the author has explained his meaning, by restricting the censure to all who have ranged themselves *on the side* of the clergy under consideration. But as far as the most explicit avowal of the same tenets can indicate any thing, have not each of the respectable persons before mentioned ranged themselves on their side? Or if he will insist upon limiting the phrase to such as have defended them in controversy, what will he say of Overton, whose work, for a luminous statement of facts, an accurate arrangement of multifarious articles, and a close deduction of proofs, would do honour to the first polemic of the age? In affecting a contempt of this most able writer, he has contradicted himself, having, in another part of his work, borne a reluctant testimony to his talents. He closes his animadversions on the clergy usually styled evangelical, with the following important concessions:—

"We are ready to own, though there have been a few "instances to the contrary, that the moral conduct of the "men in question is consistent with their calling; and "that though the faults above detailed are found among "them, yet that, as a body, they are more than free from "immoralities."—P. 162.

The men to whom their accuser ascribes an assemblage of virtues, so rare and so important, must unquestionably be "the excellent of the earth," and deserve a very different treatment from what they have received at his hands.

Before we put a final period to this article, we must beg the reader's patience to a few remarks on the general tendency of the work under examination.

For the freedom of censure the author has assumed, he cannot plead the privilege of reproof. He has violated every law by which it is regulated. In administering reproof, we are not wont to call in a third party, least

of all the party to whom the persons reproved are directly opposed. Besides, if reproof is intended to have any effect, it must be accompanied with the indications of a friendly mind; since none ever succeeded in reclaiming the person he did not appear to love. The spirit this writer displays toward the objects of his censure, is decidedly hostile; no expressions of esteem, no attempt to conciliate; all is rudeness, asperity, and contempt. He tells us in his preface, " It is difficult to find an apology " for disrespectful language under any circumstances: if " it can be at all excused, it is when he who utters lets " us know from whence it comes; but he who dares to " use it, and yet dares not to put his name to the abuse, " gives us reason to conclude that his cowardice is equal " to his insolence." (Pref. p. iv.) In violation of his own canon, he seems to have assumed a disguise for the very purpose of giving an unbridled indulgence to the insolence he condemns.

If we consider him the light of a public Censor, he will appear to have equally neglected the proprieties of that character. He who undertakes that office ought, in all reason, to direct his chief attention to vice and impiety; which, as the common foes of human nature, give every one the privilege of attack: but, though his subject naturally led him to it, we find little or nothing of the kind. In his eagerness to expose the aberrations of goodness, the most deadly sins, and the most destructive errors, are scarcely noticed. In surveying the state of morals, the eccentricities of a pious zeal, a hairbreadth deviation from ecclesiastical etiquette, a momentary feeling of tenderness towards dissenters, are the things which excite his indignation; while the secularity, the indolence, the ambition, and dissipation, too prevalent in the church, almost escape his observation. We do not mean to assert, that it is always improper to animadvert on the errors and mistakes of good men; we are convinced of the contrary. But, whenever it is attempted, it ought to be accompanied with such expressions of tenderness and esteem, as shall mark our sense of their superiority to persons of an opposite description. In the moral de-

lineations with which the New Testament abounds, when the imperfections of christians are faithfully reprehended, we are never tempted to lose sight of the infinite disparity betwixt the friends and the enemies of the gospel. Our reverence for good men is not impaired by contemplating their infirmities: while those who are strangers to vital religion, with whatever amiable qualities they may be invested, appear objects of pity. The impression made by the present performance is just the reverse. The character of the unquestionably good is placed in so invidious a light on the one hand, and the bad qualities of their opponents so artfully disguised and extenuated on the other, that the reader feels himself at a loss which to prefer. Its obvious tendency is to obliterate every distinctive mark and characteristic by which genuine religion is ascertained.

The writer of this work cannot have intended the reformation of the party on which he has animadverted; for, independently of his having, by the rudeness of his attack, forfeited every claim to their esteem, he has so conducted it, that there is not one in fifty guilty of the faults he has laid to their charge. Instead of being induced to alter their conduct, they can only feel for him those sentiments which unfounded calumny is apt to inspire. The very persons to whom his censures apply, will be more likely to feel their resentment rise at the bitterness and rancour which accompanies them, than to profit by his admonitions.

As we are fully convinced that the controversy agitated between the evangelical party and their opponents, involves the essential interests of the gospel, and whatever renders Christianity worth contending for, we cannot but look with jealousy on the person who offers himself as an umpire; especially when we perceive a leaning towards the party which we consider in the wrong. This partiality may be traced almost through every page of the present work. Were we to look only to speculative points, we might be tempted to think otherwise. It is not, however, in the cool, argumentative parts of a work, that the bias of an author is so much to be perceived, as

in the declamatory parts, when he gives a freer scope to his feelings. It is in the choice of the epithets applied to the respective parties, in the expression of contemptuous or respectful feeling, in the solicitude apparent to please the one, combined with the carelessness of offending the other, that he betrays the state of his heart. Judged by this criterion, this author must be pronounced an *enemy* to the evangelical party. We hope this unnatural alienation from the servants of Christ will not prove contagious, or it will soon completely overthrow that reformation which the established church has experienced within the last fifty years.

When Samson was brought into the house of Dagon to make sport for the Philistines, it was by the Philistines themselves: had it been done by an Israelite, it would have betrayed a blindness much more deplorable than that of Samson. Great as were the irregularities and disorders which deformed the church at Corinth, and severely as they were reprehended, it is easy to conceive, but impossible to express, the indignation Paul would have felt, had a christian held up those disorders to the view and the derision of the heathen world. It is well known that the conduct of Luther, of Carlostadt, and of many other reformers, furnished matter of merited censure, and even of plausible invective; but he who had employed himself in emblazoning and magnifying their faults, would have been deemed a foe to the Reformation. Aware that it will be replied to this, the cases are different, and neither the truth of christianity, nor the doctrines of the Reformation are involved in the issue of the present controversy; we answer, without hesitation, that the controversy now on foot *does* involve nearly all that renders it important for christianity to be true, and most precisely the doctrines of the Reformation, to which the papists are not more inimical (in some points they are less so) than the opponents of the evangelical clergy. It is the old enmity to the gospel, under a new form; an enmity as deadly and inveterate as that which animated the breast of Porphyry or of Julian.

The impression of character on the public mind is

closely connected with that of principles; so that, in the mixed questions more especially which regard religion and morals, it is vain to expect men will condescend to be instructed by those whom they are taught to despise. Let it be generally supposed that the patrons of orthodox piety are weak, ignorant, and enthusiastic, despicable as a body, with the exception of a few individuals; after being inured to such representations from their enemies, let the public be told this by one who was formerly their friend and associate,—and is it possible to conceive a circumstance more calculated to obstruct the efficacy of their principles? Will the prejudices of an irreligious world against the gospel be mitigated, by being inspired with contempt for its abettors? Will it be won to the love of piety, by being schooled in the scorn and derision of its most serious professors?

We can readily suppose, that, stung with the reproaches cast upon his party, he is weary of bearing the cross: if this be the case, let him at once renounce his principles, and not attempt, by mean concessions, and a temporizing policy, to form an impracticable coalition betwixt the world and the church. We apprehend the ground he has taken is untenable, and that he will be likely to please neither party. By the friends of the gospel he will be in danger of being shunned as an "accuser of the brethren;" while his new associates regard him with the contempt due to a sycophant.

It must give the enlightened friends of religion concern, to witness a spirit gaining ground amongst us, which, to speak of it in the most favourable terms, is calculated to sow the seeds of discord. The vivid attention to moral discrimination, the vigilance which seizes on what is deemed reprehensible, is unhappily turned to the supposed failings of good men, much to the satisfaction, no doubt, of an ungodly world. The practice of caricaturing the most illustrious men has grown fashionable amongst us. With grief and indignation we lately witnessed an attempt of this kind on the character of Mr. Whitfield, made, if our information be correct, by the present author; in which every shade of imperfection,

which tradition can supply, or ingenuity surmise, is industriously brought forward for the purpose of sinking him in public estimation. Did it accomplish the object intended by it? It certainly did not. While the prejudice entertained against Whitfield, by the enemies of religion, was already too violent to admit of increase, its friends were perfectly astonished at the littleness of soul, and the callousness to every kind feeling, which could delight in mangling such a character. It was his misfortune to mingle freely with different denominations, to preach in unconsecrated places, and convert souls at uncanonical hours:—whether he acted right or wrong in these particulars, it is not our province to inquire. That he approved himself to his own conscience, there is not the least room to doubt. Admitting his conduct, in the instances alluded to, to have been inconsistent with his clerical engagements, let it be temperately censured; but let it not efface from our recollection the patient self-denial, the unextinguishable ardour, the incredible labours, and the unexampled success, of that extraordinary man. The most zealous votaries of the church need be under no apprehension of her being often disgraced by producing such a man as Mr. Whitfield. *Nil admirari*, is an excellent maxim, when applied, as Horace intended it, to the goods of fortune: when extended to a character, nothing can be more injurious. A sensibility to the impression of great virtues bordering on enthusiasm, accompanied with a generous oblivion of the little imperfections with which they are joined, is one of the surest prognostics of excellence.

> " Verum, ubi plura nitent—non ego paucis
> Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
> Aut humana parum cavit natura —"

The modern restorers of the piety of the church of England were eminent for their godly simplicity and fidelity. Sincerely attached, as it became them, to the establishment of which they were ministers, their spirit was too enlarged, too ardent, too disinterested, to suffer them to become the tools of a party, or to confound the

interests of christianity with those of any external communion. From their being looked upon as innovators, as well as from the paucity of their numbers, they were called upon to endure a much severer trial than falls to the lot of their successors. They bore the burden and heat of the day: they laboured, and others have entered into their labours. We feel, with respect to the greater part of those who succeed them, a confidence that they will continue to tread in their steps. But we cannot dissemble our concern at perceiving a set of men rising up among them, ambitious of new modelling the party, who, if they have too much virtue openly to renounce their principles, yet have too little firmness to endure the consequences: timid, temporising spirits, who would refine into insipidity, polish into weakness, and, under we know not what pretences of regularity, moderation, and a care not to offend, rob it utterly of that energy of character to which it owes its success. If they learn, from this and other writers of a similar description, to insult their brethren, fawn upon their enemies, and abuse their defenders, they will soon be frittered to pieces; they will become "like other men," feeble, enervated, and shorn of their strength. We would adjure them to be on their guard against the machinations of this new sect. We cannot suspect them of the meanness of submitting to be drilled by their enemies, whom they are invited to approach in the attitude of culprits, beseeching them (in our author's phrase) to "inquire "whether there may not be some found among them of "unexceptionable character!" We trust they will treat such a suggestion with ineffable contempt.

After the taste our readers have had of this writer's spirit, they will not be surprised at his entire disapprobation of Mr. Overton's work. The discordance of sentiment must be great betwixt him who wishes to betray, and him whose aim is to defend. Mr. Overton, in behalf of his brethren, boldly appeals from their accusers to the public. This writer crouches to those very accusers, approaches them in a supplicating tone, and, as the price of peace, offers the heads of his brethren in a charger.

Overton, by a copious detail of facts, and by a series of irrefragable arguments, establishes their innocence: this writer assents to their condemnation, entreating only that execution may be respited till an inquiry is made into the degrees of delinquency. The author of The True Churchman Ascertained, clothes himself with the light of truth: the author of Zeal without Innovation hides himself in the thickest gloom of equivocation.

Before we close this article, we must entreat our reader's patience, while we make one observation relating to the permanence of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is possible the dignitaries of the church may be at a loss to decide whether the services of the evangelical class shall be accepted or rejected; but we are persuaded the people will feel no difficulty in determining whether or not to continue their attendance at the places from whence they are banished. Teachers of the opposite description have already lost their hold on the public mind; and they will lose it more and more. Should the secession from the established church become so general, as that its services are no longer the objects of popular suffrage, it will be deprived of its firmest support. For the author of the Alliance acknowledges that the compact betwixt church and state, which he allows to be a virtual rather than a formal one, rests mainly upon the circumstance of the established religion being that of the majority, without which it becomes incapable of rendering those services to the state, for the sake of which its privileges and emoluments were conferred. Nothing but an extreme infatuation can accelerate such an event. But if pious and orthodox men be prevented from entering into the church, or compelled to retire from it, the people will retire with them; and the apprehension of the church being in danger, which has so often been the watchword of party, will become, for once, well founded.

REVIEW

OF

GISBORNE'S SERMONS.

Sermons, principally designed to illustrate and to enforce Christian Morality. By the Rev. T. Gisborne; A.M. 8vo. pp. 430. 1809.

We have read these sermons with so much satisfaction, that, were it in our power to aid their circulation by any testimony of our approbation, we should be almost at a loss for terms sufficiently strong and emphatic. Though the excellent author is possessed already of a large share of the public esteem, we are persuaded these discourses will make a great accession to his celebrity. Less distinguished by any predominant quality than by an assemblage of the chief excellencies in pulpit composition, they turn on subjects not very commonly handled, and discuss them with a copiousness, delicacy, and force, which evince the powers of a master. They are almost entirely upon moral subjects, yet equally remote from the superficiality and dryness with which these subjects are too often treated. The morality of Mr. Gisborne is arrayed in all the majesty of truth and all the beauties of holiness. In perusing these sermons, the reader is continually reminded of real life, and beholds human nature under its most unsophisticated aspect, without ever being tempted to suppose himself in the schools of pagan philosophy. We cannot better explain the professed scope and object of the author, than by copying a few sentences from his preface.

"Of late years it has been loudly asserted, that, "among clergymen who have showed themselves very

"earnest in doctrinal points, adequate regard has not "been evinced to moral instruction. The charge has "perhaps been urged with the greatest vehemence by "persons who have employed little trouble in examining "into its truth. In many cases it has been groundless, "in many, exaggerated. In some instances there has "been reason, I fear, for a degree of complaint; and in "more, a colourable pretext for the imputation. I be-"lieve that some preachers, shocked on beholding exam-"ples, real or supposed, of congregations starving on "mere morality, substituted for the bread of life; eager "to lay broad and deep the foundations of the gospel, "and ultimately apprehensive lest their own hearers "should suspect them of reverting towards *legality*, have "not given to morals, as fruits of faith, the station and "the amplitude to which they have a scriptural claim. "Anxious lest others should mistake, or lest they should "themselves be deemed to mistake, the branch for the "root; not satisfied with proclaiming to the branch, as "they were bound habitually to proclaim, *Thou bearest* "*not the root, but the root thee*, they have shrunk from the "needful office of tracing the ramifications. They have "not left morality out of their discourses, but they have "kept it too much in the back-ground. They have no-"ticed it shortly, generally, incidentally; in a manner "which, while perhaps they were eminent as private "patterns of moral duties, might not sufficiently guard "an unwary hearer against a reduced estimate of prac-"tical holiness, nor exempt themselves from the sus-"picion of undervaluing moral obedience." Pref. pp. vii., viii.

To the truth of these remarks we cordially assent, as they point to a defect in the ministration of some excellent men, which the judicious part of the public have long lamented, and which Mr. Gisborne, in his present work, has taught his contemporaries how to remedy. Extremes naturally lead to each other. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel had been so long neglected by the most celebrated preachers, and the pernicious consequences of that neglect, in wearing out every trace of

genuine religion, had been so deeply felt, that it is not to be wondered at if the first attempts to correct the evil were accompanied with a tendency to the contrary extreme. In many situations, those who attempted to revive doctrines which had long been considered as obsolete, found themselves much in the same circumstances as missionaries, having intelligence to impart before unknown, and exposed to all the contempt and obloquy which assailed the first preachers of christianity. While they were engaged in such an undertaking, it is not at all surprising that they confined their attention almost entirely to the doctrines peculiar to the christian religion, with less care to inculcate and display the moral precepts which it includes in common with other systems than their intrinsic importance demanded. They were too much occupied in removing the rubbish and laying the foundations, to permit them to carry their superstructure very high. They insisted, in general terms, on the performance of moral duties; urged the necessity of that holiness without which "none shall see the Lord;" and, by a forcible application of truth to the conscience, produced in many instances the most surprising, as well as the most happy effects. But still, in consequence of limiting their ministry too much to the first elements of the gospel, and dwelling chiefly on topics calculated to alarm the careless and console the faithful, a wrong taste began to prevail amongst their hearers—a disrelish of moral discussions, a propensity to contemplate christianity under one aspect alone,—that of a system of relief for the guilty, instead of a continual discipline of the heart. Those wished for stimulants and cordials, whose situation required alteratives and correctives. Preachers and hearers have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the fear of being reproached as "*legal*," deterred some good men from insisting so much on moral and practical subjects as their own good sense would have dictated. By this means the malady became more inveterate, till the inherent corruption of human nature converted the doctrine of the gospel, in a greater or less degree, into the leaven of antinomianism.

An error, which at first appeared trivial, at length proved serious; and thus it came to pass that the fabric of sacred truth was almost universally reared in such a manner as to deviate sensibly from the primitive model.

When we look at christianity in the New Testament, we see a set of discoveries, promises, and precepts, adapted to influence the whole character: it presents an object of incessant solicitude, in the pursuit of which new efforts are to be exerted, and new victories accomplished, in a continued course of well-doing, till we reach the heavenly mansions. There is scarce a spring in the human frame and constitution it is not calculated to touch, nor any portion of human agency which is exempted from its control. Its resources are inexhaustible; and the considerations by which it challenges attention embrace whatever is most awful or alluring in the whole range of possible existence. Instead of being allowed to repose on his past attainments, or to flatter himself with the hope of success without the exercise of diligence and watchfulness, the christian is commanded to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. In the *actual* exhibition of religion, the solicitude of serious minds has been made to turn too much on a particular crisis, which has been presented in a manner so insulated, that nothing in the order of means seemed instrumental to its production. In short, things have been represented in such a manner as was too apt to produce despondency before conversion, and presumption after it.

It must be allowed, the judicious management of practical subjects is more difficult than the discussion of doctrinal points; which may also account, in part, for the prevalence of the evil we are now speaking of. In treating a point of doctrine, the habit of belief almost supersedes the necessity of proof: the mind of the hearer is usually pre-occupied in favour of the conclusions to be established; nor is much address or ingenuity necessary to conduct him in a path in which he has long been accustomed to tread. The materials are prepared to the preacher's hands; a set of texts, with their received interpretations, stand ready for his use; the compass of

thought which is required is very limited; and this little circle has been beaten so often, that an ordinary understanding moves through it with mechanical facility. To discuss a doctrinal position to the satisfaction of a common audience requires the smallest possible exertion of intellect. The tritest arguments are, in fact, the best: the most powerful considerations to enforce assent are rendered, by that very quality, the most conspicuous, as the sun announces himself by his superior splendour. In delineating the duties of life the task is very different. To render these topics interesting, it is necessary to look abroad, to contemplate the principles of human nature, and the diversified modes of human feeling and action. The preacher has not to do with a few rigid and unbending propositions: he is to contemplate and portray a real state of things—a state which is continually changing its aspect, while it preserves its essential character, and the particulars of which mock the powers of enumeration. If he does not think with great originality, he must at least think for himself: he must use his own eyes, though he may report nothing but what has been observed before. As there lies an appeal, on these occasions, to the unbiassed good sense and observation of unlettered minds, the deficiencies of an injudicious instructor are sure to be detected. His principles will fail of interesting for want of exemplification, or his details will be devoid of dignity, and his delineations of human life disgust by their deviation from nature and from truth.

In points of casuistry, difficulties will occur which can only be solved and disentangled by nice discrimination, combined with extensive knowledge. The general precepts, for example, of justice and humanity, may be faithfully inculcated, and earnestly insisted on, without affording a ray of useful direction to a doubting conscience. While all men acknowledge the indispensable obligation of these precepts, it is not always easy to discover what is the precise line of action they enforce. In the application of general rules to particular cases of conduct, many relations must be surveyed, opposing claims must be reconciled and adjusted, and the comparative value of

different species of virtue established upon just and solid principles.

These difficulties have been evaded, rather than overcome, by the greater part of moralizing preachers; who have contented themselves with retailing extracts from the works of their celebrated predecessors, or with throwing together a few loose and undigested thoughts on a moral duty, without order and arrangement, or the smallest effort to impress its obligation upon the conscience, or to deduce it from its proper sources. To the total want of unction, to the cold, pagan, anti-christian cast of these compositions, joined to their extreme superficiality, must be ascribed, in a great measure, the disgust which many serious minds have contracted against the introduction of moral topics into the pulpit. Our readers will not suspect we mean to apply this censure indiscriminately, or that we are insensible to the extraordinary merits of a Barrow or of a Tillotson, who have cultivated christian morals with so universal an applause of the English public. We admire, as much as it is possible for our readers to admire, the rich invention, the masculine sense, the exuberantly copious, yet precise and energetic diction, which distinguish the first of these writers, who, by a rare felicity of genius, united in himself the most distinguishing qualities of the mathematician and of the orator. We are astonished at perceiving, in the same person, and in the same composition, the close logic of Aristotle combined with the amplifying powers of Plato. The candour, the good sense, the natural arrangement, the unpremeditated graces of Tillotson, if they excite less admiration, give us almost equal pleasure. It is, indeed, the peculiar boast of the English nation, to have produced a set of divines, who, being equally acquainted with classical antiquity and inspired writ, and capable of joining, to the deepest results of unassisted reason, the advantages of a superior illumination, have delivered down to posterity a body of moral instruction more pure, copious, and exact, than subsists amongst any other people; and had they appealed more frequently to the peculiar principles of the gospel, had they infused a more

evangelical spirit into their discourses, instead of representing christianity too much as a mere code of morals, they would have left us nothing to wish or to regret. Their decision of moral questions was for the most part unquestionably just; but they contemplated moral duties too much apart, neglecting to blend them sufficiently with the motives and principles of pure revelation, after the manner of the inspired writers; and supposing them to believe, they forgot to inculcate, the fundamental truth—that "*by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified.*" Those internal dispositions, whence right conduct can alone flow, were too little insisted on; the agency of the Spirit was not sufficiently honoured or acknowledged; and the subordination of the duties of the second to those of the first table not enough kept in view. The virtues they recommended and enforced were too often considered as the native growth of the human heart, instead of being represented as "*fruits of the Spirit.*" Jesus Christ was not laid as the foundation of morality; and a very sparing use was made of the motives to its practice deduced from his promises. his example, and his sacrifice. Add to this, that the labours of these great men were employed almost entirely in illustrating and enforcing the obligation of particular duties, while the doctrine of the cross engaged little of their attention, except so far as it was impugned by the objections of infidels, or mutilated by the sophistry of papists. From the perusal of their writings, the impression naturally results, that a belief of the evidences of revealed religion, joined to a correct deportment in social life, is adequate to all the demands of christianity. For these reasons, much as we admire, we cannot recommend them in an unqualified manner, nor consider them as safe guides in religion.

By these remarks, we intend no offence to any class of christians. That the celebrated authors we have mentioned, with others of a similar stamp, have refined the style and improved the taste of the English pulpit, while they have poured a copious stream of knowledge on the public mind, we are as ready to acknowledge as their

warmest admirers; but we will not disguise our conviction, that, for the just delineation of the "truth as it is in Jesus," we must look to the Baxters, the Howes, and the Ushers of an earlier period. He who wishes to catch the flame of devotion by listening to the words "which are spirit and are life," will have recourse to the writings of the latter, notwithstanding their intricacy of method and prolixity of style.

It is with peculiar satisfaction we call the attention of our readers to a work which unites, in a considerable degree, the excellencies of each class of divines alluded to, without their defects. The discourses are on the following subjects: Our Lord Jesus Christ the Foundation of Morality; on the Evils resulting from false Principles of Morality; on the Changes produced, by the Coming of Christ, in the Situation of Men as to the Divine Law; Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality; on Living after the Flesh or after the Spirit; the Love of God an Inducement to strict Morality; on Brotherly Love; on the Love of Money; on the Sacrifice of Worldly Interest to Duty; on Christian Bounty; on Discontent; on Worldly Anxiety; on Christian Obedience to Civil Rulers; Christian Patriotism illustrated by the Character of Nehemiah; on quiet Diligence in our Proper Concerns; on Partiality; on Suspicion; on doing Evil to produce Good; on the Superiority of Moral Conduct required of Christians. The reader will perceive it was not the author's design to make a systematic arrangement of christian duties, and that there are many vices and virtues not comprehended within the plan of his present work. In the discussion of the subjects which he has selected, he has evinced much observation of human life, a deep insight into the true principles of morals, and an intimate acquaintance with the genius of the christian religion. He has erected his edifice upon a solid basis; in the choice of his materials, he has carefully excluded the wood, hay, and stubble, and admitted no ornaments but such as are fitted to grace the temple of God.

The intelligent reader will discover, in these discourses,

the advantage resulting from studying morality as a science. It will yield him great satisfaction to find the writer ascending on all occasions to first principles, forming his decision on comprehensive views, separating what is specious from what is solid, and enforcing morality by no motives which are suspicious or equivocal. He will not see vanity or ambition pressed into the service of virtue, or any approach to the adoption of that dangerous policy which proposes to expel one vice by encouraging another. He will meet with no flattering encomiums on the purity and dignity of our nature, none of those appeals to the innate goodness of the human heart, which are either utterly ineffectual, or, if they restrain from open profligacy, diffuse, at the same time, the more subtle poison of pride and self-righteousness. Mr. Gisborne never confounds the functions of morality with the offices of the Saviour, nor ascribes to human virtue, polluted and imperfect at best, any part of those transcendent effects which the New Testament teaches us to impute to the mediation of Christ. He considers the whole compass of moral duties as branches of religion, as prescribed by the will of God, and no farther acceptable to him than as they proceed from religious motives.

The disposition in mankind to seek justification by the works of the law has been so much flattered and encouraged by the light in which moral duties have been usually placed, that Mr. Gisborne has shown his judgement by counteracting this error at the outset. We recommend to the serious attention of our readers, with this view, the fourth sermon, on Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality. We have never seen a publication in which that important argument is set in a more clear and convincing light.

Though Mr. Gisborne for a series of years has distinguished himselt as the able opponent of the doctrine of expediency, yet on no occasion has he exerted more ability in this cause than in his present work. We recommend it to the thinking part of the public to forget for a moment that they are reading a sermon, and conceive themselves attending to the arguments of a sober and

enlightened philosopher. To purify the sources of morals, and to detect the principles of a theory, which enables us to err by system and be depraved by rule, is to do good of the highest sort; as he who diminishes the mass of human calamity by striking one from the list of diseases, is a greater benefactor to mankind than the physician who performs the greatest number of cures. It is in this light we look upon the labours of the present author; to whom we are more indebted than to any other individual for discrediting a doctrine, which threatens to annihilate religion, to loosen the foundation of morals, and to debase the character of the nation. We recommend to universal perusal the admirable discourse, on the Evils resulting from false Principles of Morality.

The two discourses which propose to illustrate the Character of Nehemiah contain the most valuable instruction, adapted, in particular, to the use of those who occupy the higher ranks, or who possess stations of commanding influence and authority. They evince just and enlarged views of the duties attached to elevated situations, and breathe the purest spirit of christian benevolence. The Sermon on the Love of Money displays, perhaps, most of the powers of the orator, and demonstrates in how masterly a manner the author is capable, when he pleases, of enforcing " the terrors of the Lord." It contains some awful passages, in which, by a kind of repeated asseveration of the same truth, and the happy reiteration of the same words, an effect is produced resembling that of repeated claps of thunder. We shall present our readers with the following specimen.

" Fourthly. Meditate on the final condition to which " the lover of money is hastening. The *covetous*, the " man who is under the dominion of the love of money, " ' shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' In the pre- " sent life he has a foretaste of the fruits of his sin. He " is restless, anxious, dissatisfied; at one time harassed " by uncertainty as to the probable result of his pro- " jects; at another, soured by the failure of them; at an- " other, disappointed in the midst of success, by discern- " ing, too late, that the same exertions employed in

" some other line of advantage would have been more " productive. But suppose him to have been, through " life, as free from the effects of these sources of vexation " as the most favourable picture could represent him, " ' he shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' He may " not have been a miser; but he was a lover of money. " He may not have been an extortioner; but he was a " lover of money. He may not have been fraudulent; " but he was a lover of money. ' He shall not inherit " the kingdom of God.' He has had his day and his " object. He has sought, and he may have accumu- " lated, earthly possessions. By their instrumentality he " may have gratified many other appetites and desires. " But he did not seek first the kingdom of God; there- " fore he shall not obtain it. He ' loved the world;' " therefore he ' shall perish with the world.' He has " wilfully bartered his soul for money. In vain is he " now aghast at his former madness. In vain does he " now detest the idol which he worshipped. The gate " of salvation is closed against him. He inherits the " bitterness of unavailing remorse, the horrors of eternal " death."—Pp. 145, 146.

If we were called to specify the discourse in the present volume that appeared to us the most ingenious and original, we should be inclined to point to the eighteenth, on Suspicion.

Having expressed our warm approbation of this performance, justice compels us to notice what appear to us its principal blemishes; which, however, are so overbalanced by the merit of the whole, that we should scarcely deem them worthy of remark, were it not requisite to vindicate our claim to impartiality. Against the sentiments or the arrangement of these discourses we have nothing to object: the former are almost invariably just and important, often striking and original; the latter is natural and easy, preserving the *spirit* of method even where it may seem to neglect the form; equally remote from the looseness of an harangue, and the ostentation of logical exactness. With the style of this work we cannot say that we are quite so much satisfied. Per-

spicuous, dignified, and correct, it yet wants something more of amenity, variety, and ease. Instead of that flexibility which bends to accommodate itself to the different conceptions which occur, it preserves a sort of uniform stateliness. The art of transposition, carried, in our opinion, to excess, together with the preference of learned to plain Saxon words, give it an air of Latinity, which must necessarily render it less intelligible and acceptable to unlettered minds. It is, indeed, but fair to remark, that the discourses appear to have been chiefly designed for the use of the higher classes. But while we allow this apology its just weight, we are still of opinion that the composition might have assumed a more easy and natural air, without losing any thing of its force or beauty. Addresses from the pulpit should, in our apprehension, always make some approach to the character of being plain and popular.

Another blemish which strikes us in this work, is the frequent use of interrogations, introduced, not only in the warm and impassioned parts, where they are graceful, but in the midst of argumentative discussion. We have been struck with the prevalence of this practice in the more recent works of clergymen, beyond those of any other order of men. With Demosthenes, we know interrogation was a very favourite figure; but we recollect, at the same time, it was chiefly confined to the more vehement parts of his speeches, in which, like the eruptions of a furnace, he broke out upon, and consumed his opponents. In him it was the natural expression of triumphant indignation: after he had subdued and laid them prostrate by the force of his arguments, by his abrupt and terrible interrogations he trampled them in the mire. In calm and dispassionate discussion, the frequent use of questions appears to us unnatural: it discomposes the attention by a sort of starting and irregular motion, and is a violation of dignity, by affecting to be lively where it is sufficient praise to be cogent and convincing. In a word, when, instead of being used to give additional vehemence to a discourse, they are interspersed in a series of arguments, as an expedient for enlivening the attention and

varying the style, they have an air of undignified flippancy. We should scarcely have noticed these little circumstances in an inferior work; but we could not satisfy ourselves to let them pass without observation in an author who, to merits of a more substantial nature, joins so many and such just pretensions to the character of a fine writer.

REVIEW

OF

GREGORY'S LETTERS.

Letters to a Friend on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Duties of the Christian Religion. By Olinthus Gregory, LL. D. *of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich.* 1812.

As this is a work of no ordinary merit, and written upon a subject which all must confess to be of the last importance, we shall endeavour, after being indulged with a few preliminary remarks, to give a pretty copious analysis of its contents; not doubting the greater part of our readers will be solicitous to avail themselves of the rich entertainment and instruction which its perusal will unquestionably afford. The first volume is employed in the discussion of a subject which has engaged the powers of the wisest of men through a series of ages; and minds of every size, and of every diversity of acquisition, having contributed their quota towards its elucidation, the accumulation of materials is such, that it has become more necessary, perhaps more difficult, to arrange than to invent. In the conduct of so extensive an argument, the talents of the writer will chiefly appear, in giving the due degree of relief and prominence to the different branches of the subject,—in determining what should be placed in a strong and brilliant light, and what should be more slightly sketched,—and disposing the whole in such a manner as shall give it the most impressive effect. If there is little room for the display of invention, other powers are requisite, not less rare or less useful; a nice and discriminating judgement, a true logical taste, and a

talent of extensive combination. An ordinary thinker feels himself lost in so wide a field; is incapable of classifying the objects it presents; and wastes his attention on such as are trite and common, instead of directing it to those which are great and interesting. If there are subjects which it is difficult to discuss for want of data to proceed upon—and, while they allure by their appearance of abstract grandeur, are soon found to lose themselves in fruitless logomachies and unmeaning subtleties, such as the greater part of the discussions on time, space, and necessary existence,—there are others whose difficulty springs from an opposite cause, from the immense variety of distinct topics and considerations involved in their discussion, of which the divine origination of christianity is a striking specimen; which it has become difficult to treat as it ought to be treated, merely in consequence of the variety and super-abundance of its proofs.

On this account, we suspect that this great cause has been not a little injured by the injudicious conduct of a certain class of preachers and writers, who, in just despair of being able to handle a single topic of religion to advantage, for want of having paid a devout attention to the Scriptures, fly like harpies to the evidences of christianity, on which they are certain of meeting with something prepared to their hands, which they can tear, and soil, and mangle at their pleasure.

Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia fœdant.

The famine also, with which their prototypes in Virgil threatened the followers of Æneas, is not more dismal than that which prevails among their hearers and readers. The folly we are adverting to did not escape the observation nor the ridicule of Swift, who remarked in his days, that the practice of mooting, on every occasion, the question of the origin of christianity was much more likely to unsettle the faith of the simple, than to counteract the progress of infidelity. It is dangerous to familiarize every promiscuous audience to consider religion as a thing which yet remains to be proved,

to acquaint them with every sophism and cavil which a perverse and petulant ingenuity has found out, unaccompanied, as is too often the case, with a satisfactory answer; thus leaving the poison to operate, without the antidote, in minds which ought to be strongly imbued with the principles, and awed by the sanctions, of the gospel. It is degrading to the dignity of a revelation, established through a succession of ages by indubitable proofs, to be adverting every moment to the hypothesis of its being an imposture, and to be inviting every insolent sophist to wrangle with us about the title, when we should be cultivating the possession. The practice we are now censuring is productive of another inconvenience. The argument of the truth of christianity being an argument of accumulation, or, in other words, of that nature, that the force of it results less from any separate consideration than from an almost infinite variety of circumstances, conspiring toward one point, and terminating in one conclusion; this concentration of evidence is broken to pieces when an attempt is made to present it in superficial descants; than which nothing can be conceived better calculated to make what is great appear little, and what is ponderous, light. The trite observation, that a cause is injured by the adoption of feeble arguments, rests on a basis not often considered, perhaps, by those who most readily assent to its truth. We never think of estimating the powers of the imagination on a given subject, by the actual performance of the poet; but if he disappoint us, we immediately ascribe his failure to the poverty of his genius, without accusing his subject or his art. The regions of fiction we naturally conceive to be boundless; but, when an attempt is made to convince us of the truth of a proposition respecting a matter of fact or a branch of morals, we take it for granted, that he who proposes it has made himself perfectly master of his argument; and that, as no consideration has been neglected that would favour his opinion, we shall not err in taking our impression of the cause from the defence of its advocate. If that cause happen to be such as involves the dearest interests of mankind,

we need not remark how much injury it is capable of sustaining from this quarter.

Let us not be supposed, by these remarks, to comprehend within our censure the writer, who amidst the multifarious proofs of revelation, selects a single topic, with a view to its more elaborate discussion, provided it be of such a nature that it will support an independent train of thought; such, for example, as Paley has pursued in his Horæ Paulinæ, to which a peculiar value ought to be attached, as a clear addition to the body of christian evidences. All we mean to assert is, that it is incomparably better to be silent on the evidences of christianity, than to be perpetually adverting to them in a slight and superficial manner; and that a question so awful and momentous as that relating to the origin of the christian religion, ought not to be debased into a trivial commonplace. Let it be formally discussed, at proper intervals, by such men, and such only, as are capable of bringing to it the time, talents, and information, requisite to place it in a commanding attitude. That the author of the present performance is possessed of these qualifications to a very great degree, will sufficiently appear from the analysis we propose to give of the work, and the specimens we shall occasionally exhibit of its execution.

It is ushered in by a modest and dignified dedication to Colonel Mudge, lieutenant-governor of that royal military institution, of which the author is so distinguished an ornament. The whole is cast into the form of Letters to a Friend; and the first volume, we are given to understand, formed the subject of an actual correspondence. As much of the epistolary style is preserved as is consistent with the nature of a serious and protracted argument, without ill-judged attempts at refreshing the attention of the reader by strokes of gaiety and humour. The mind of the writer appears to have been too deeply impressed with his theme to admit of such excursions, the absence of which will not, we are persuaded, be felt or regretted.

Before he proceeds to state the direct proofs of the divinity of the christian religion, he shows, in a very

striking manner, the absurdities which must of necessity be embraced by those who deny all pretences to revelation; enumerating, in the form of a creed, the various strange and untenable positions which form the subject of sceptical belief. In this part of the work, that disease in the intellectual temperament of infidels is placed in a stronger and juster light than we remember to have seen it, which may not improperly be denominated the credulity of unbelievers. This representation forms the contents of the first letter.

The necessity of revelation is still more indisputably evinced by an appeal to facts, and a survey of the opinions which prevailed among the most enlightened heathens, respecting God, moral duty, and a future state. Under each of these heads, our author has selected, with great judgement, numerous instances of the flagrant and pernicious errors entertained by the most celebrated pagan legislators, poets, and philosophers; sufficient to demonstrate, beyond all contradiction, the inability of unassisted reason, in its most improved and perfect state, to conduct man to virtue and happiness, and the necessity, thence resulting, of superior aid. Much diligence of research, and much felicity of arrangement, are displayed in the management of this complicated topic, where the reader will find exhibited, in a condensed form, the most material facts adduced in Leland's voluminous work on this subject. All along, the author holds the balance with a firm and steady hand, without betraying a disposition either to depreciate the value of those discoveries and improvements to which reason really attained, or to charge the picture of its aberrations and defects with deeper shades than justly belong to it. The most eminent among the pagans themselves, it ought to be remembered, who, having no other resource, were best acquainted with its weakness and its power, never dreamed of denying the necessity of revelation: this they asserted in the most explicit terms; and on some occasions seem to have expected and anticipated the communication of such a benefit. We make no apology for citing, from the present work, the following remark-

able passage out of Plato, tending both to confirm the fact of a revelation being anticipated, and to evince, supposing nothing supernatural in the case, the profound sagacity of that great author. He says, " This just person (the inspired teacher of whom he had been speaking) must be poor, and void of all qualifications but those of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproofs; and therefore, that within three or four years after he began to preach he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last be put to death."* In whatever light we consider it, this must be allowed to be a most remarkable passage; whether we regard it as merely the conjecture of a highly enlightened mind, or as the fruit of prophetic suggestion: nor are we aware of any absurdity in supposing that the prolific Spirit scattered, on certain occasions, some seeds of truth amidst that mass of corruption and darkness which oppressed the pagan world. The opinion we have ventured to advance, is asserted in the most positive terms, in several parts of Justin Martyr's Second Apology. Without pursuing this inquiry farther, we shall content ourselves with remarking, that, as the sufficiency of mere reason, as the guide to truth, never entered into the conception of pagans, so it could never have been thus adduced at all, but in consequence of confounding its results with the dictates of revelation, which since its publication, has never ceased to modify the speculations, and aid the inquiries of those who are least disposed to bow to its authority. On all questions of morality and religion, the streams of thought have flowed through channels enriched with a celestial ore, whence they have derived the tincture to which they are indebted for their rarest and most salutary qualities.

Before we dismiss the subject, we would just observe, that the inefficacy of unassisted reason in religious concerns appears undeniably in two points: the doubtful manner in which the wisest pagans were accustomed to express themselves respecting a future state, the existence of which Warburton is confident none of the philo-

* De Republica, Lib. ii.

sophers believed; and their proud reliance on their own virtue, which was such as left no room for repentance. Of a future state, Socrates, in the near prospect of death, is represented by Plato as expressing a hope, accompanied with the greatest uncertainty; and, with respect to the second point, the lofty confidence in their own virtue, which we have imputed to them, the language of Cicero, in one of his familiar letters, is awfully decisive: "Nec enim dum ero, angor ulla re, cum *omni caream culpa;* et si non ero, sensu omni carebo." "While I exist, I shall be troubled at nothing, since I have no fault whatever; and if I shall not exist, I shall be devoid of all feeling."* So true is it that life and immortality were brought to light by the Saviour; and that, until he appeared, the greatest of men were equally unacquainted with their present condition and their future prospects.

The next Letter, which is the fourth in the series, is on mysteries in religion. Aware that, while the prejudice against whatever is mysterious subsists, the saving truths of the gospel can find no entrance, the author has taken great, and, as far as the force of argument can operate, successful pains, to point out the weakness of the foundations on which that prejudice rests. He has shown, by a large induction of particulars, in natural religion, in natural philosophy, and in pure and mixed mathematics, that with respect to each of these sciences, we arrive, by infallible steps, at conclusions of which we can form no clear, determinate conceptions; and that the higher parts of mathematics especially, the science which glories in its superior light and demonstration, teem with mysteries as incomprehensible to the full as those which demand our assent in revelation. His skill as a mathematician, for which he has long been distinguished, serves him on this occasion to excellent purpose, by enabling him to illustrate his subject by well selected examples from his favourite science; and by that means to prove, in the most satisfactory manner, that the mysterious parts of christianity are exactly analogous to

* Vol. I. p. 51.

the difficulties inseparable from other branches of knowledge, not excepting those which make the justest pretensions to demonstration. We run no hazard in affirming, that rarely, if ever, have superior philosophical attainments been turned to a better account, or a richer offering brought from the fields of science into the temple of God. Some of his illustrations, being drawn from the sublimer speculations of mathematics, must necessarily be unintelligible to ordinary readers: but many of them are plain and popular; and he has succeeded in making the principle on which he reasons throughout perfectly plain and perspicuous, which is this—that we are able, in a multitude of instances, to ascertain the *relations* of things, while we know little or nothing of the *nature* of the things themselves. If the distinction itself is not entirely new, the force of argument with which it is supported, and the extent to which its illustration is carried, are such as evince much original thinking. We should seriously recommend this part of the work to the perusal of "the barrister,"* if he were capable of understanding it; and to all, without exception, who have been perverted by the shallow and ambiguous sophism, first broached, we believe, by Dr. Foster, that where mystery begins, religion ends; when the fact is, that religion and mystery both begin and end together, a portion of what is inscrutable to our faculties being intimately and inseparately blended with its most vital and operative truths. A religion without its mysteries, is a temple without its God.

Having thus marked out the ground, removed the rubbish, and made room for the foundation, our author proceeds with the skill of a master to erect a firm and noble structure, conducting the argument for the truth of christianity through all its stages, and commencing his labours in this part of his subject with establishing the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred volume. As he manifestly aims at utility, not at display, we are

* An anonymous opposer of evangelical principles, who had then attained some celebrity, but is now quite forgotten. Ed.

glad to find he has availed himself of the profound and original reasoning of Hartley, which he has fortified all along with ingenious reflections of his own, and crowned by an appeal to the principal testimonies of christian and pagan antiquity. The Letter devoted to this subject is long, but not more so than the occasion demanded, and is replete with varied and extensive information. To the whole he has annexed a very accurate and particular account of the researches and discoveries of Dr. Buchanan, made during his visit to the Syrian churches in India; nor are we aware that there is a single consideration of moment, tending to confirm the genuineness and integrity of the Scriptures in their present state, which, in the course of our author's extended investigation, has escaped his notice. By some he will be blamed for placing the proofs of the authenticity of the sacred records before the argument from prophecy and miracles: but we think he is right in adopting such an arrangement; since the reasoning on this part not only stands independent of the sequel, but greatly abridges his subsequent labour, by enabling him to appeal on every occasion to the testimony of scripture, not indeed as inspired, but as an authentic document, that point having been previously established; while it is in perfect unison with that solicitude he every where evinces to imbue the mind of his readers with a serious and devotional spirit. Here is a book of a singular character, and of high antiquity, from which christians profess to derive the whole of their information on religion; and it comes down to us under such circumstances, that every thing relating to it is capable of being investigated, apart from the consideration of prophecies and miracles, except its claim to inspiration. Why, then, should not the pretensions of this book be examined at the very outset, as far as they are susceptible of an independent examination; since the proof of its being genuine and authentic will extend its consequences so far into the subsequent matter of discussion, as well as exert a great and salutary influence on the mind of the inquirer?

The next Letter is devoted to the subject of prophecy;

in which, after noticing a few of the more remarkable predictions relating to the revolutions of power and empire, he descends to a more particular investigation of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, which he arranges under three heads: such as respect the time and place of his appearance; his character, doctrine, rejection, and final triumph; and the exact correspondence betwixt his contemptuous treatment and sufferings, and the representations of the ancient oracles. Under the last, he embraces the opportunity of rescuing the proof from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, from the cavils of the Jews, as well as from the insinuation of certain infidels, that the prophecy was written after the event; which he triumphantly refutes by an appeal to a remarkable passage in the books of Origen against Celsus. In confirming the inference from prophecy, we again meet with a judicious application of the author's mathematical skill, by which he demonstrates, from the doctrine of chances, the almost infinite improbability of the occurrence of even a small number of contingent events predicted of any one individual; and the absolute impossibility, consequently, of accounting for the accomplishment of such numerous predictions as were accomplished in the person of the Messiah, without ascribing it to the power and wisdom of the Deity.

From the consideration of prophecy, he proceeds to the evidence of miracles, and the credibility of human testimony. He begins with stating, in few and simple terms, but with much precision, the just idea of a miracle, which, he remarks, has oftener been obscured than elucidated by definition; while the sentiments entertained by good men upon the subject have been almost uniformly correct, when they have not been entangled or heated by controversy. This branch of the evidences of revelation is certainly very little indebted to the introduction of subtle refinements. In resting the evidence of the Jewish and christian revelations on the ground of miracles, the author restricts his proposition to *uncontrolled miracles;* on the propriety of which, different judgements will probably be formed

by his readers. We believe him to be right: since, admitting the limitation to be unnecessary, it is but an extreme of caution, a leaning to the safe side; for who will deny that it is much easier to prove it to be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, to permit an *uncontrolled* miracle to be performed in support of error, than to demonstrate, from a metaphysical consideration of the powers and capacities of spiritual agents of a high order, their incapacity of accomplishing what, to our apprehensions, must appear supernatural? The writer of this, at least, must confess for himself, he could never find any satisfaction in such speculations, not even in those of Farmer, ingenious as they are; which always appeared to him to be like advancing to an object by a circuitous and intricate path, rather than taking the nearest road. But to return to the present performance. After exhibiting the most approved answers to the flimsy sophistry of Hume, intended to evince the incredibility of miracles,—and corroborating them by a copious illustration of the four criteria of miraculous facts, suggested by Leslie, in his admirable work, entitled, A Short Method with the Deists, he reduces the only suppositions which can be formed respecting the miracles recorded in the New Testament, to the four following heads, which we shall give in the words of the author:—

" Either, first, the recorded accounts of those miracles " were absolute fictions, wickedly invented by some who " had a wish to impose upon mankind.

" Or, secondly, Jesus did not work any true miracles; " but the senses of the people were, in some way or " other, deluded, so that they believed he really did per- " form miracles, when, in fact, he did not.

" Or, thirdly, that the spectators were not in any way " deluded, but knew very well he wrought no miracles; " yet were all (both enemies and friends, the Jews them- " selves not excepted, though they daily 'sought occa- " sion against him,') united in a close confederacy, to " persuade the world he wrought the most surprising " things. So that, while some actively circulated reports

" of those amazing occurrences, the rest kept their coun-" sel, never offering to unmask the fraud, but managing " the matter with so much dexterity and cunning, and " such an exact harmony and correspondence, that the " story of Jesus Christ's performing miracles should be-" come current, should obtain almost universal credit, " *and not a single person be able to disprove it.*

" Or, fourthly, that he did actually perform those as-" tonishing works; and that the accounts given of them " by the christian writers in the New Testament are " authentic and correct.

" He that does not adopt the last of these conclusions " will find it a matter of very small consequence which " of the other three he chooses; for that the stories can-" not be *fictions*, is evident from the reasonings of Les-" lie, already adduced; and it will be seen farther, from " a moment's consideration, that the denial of the mira-" cles of Jesus Christ, *in any way*, leads necessarily to " the admission of a series of real miracles of another " kind."

He closes this part of his disquisition with an elaborate confutation of the notion too generally admitted by the advocates of revelation, that the evidence of miraculous facts necessarily grows weaker in proportion to the distance of the time at which they were performed; and in no part does the vigour of his understanding appear to more advantage than in his reasonings on this point, where, among many excellent, we meet with the following profound remark:—

" It is only," he observes, " with regard to the facts " recorded in the Bible, that men ever talk of the daily " diminution of credibility. Who complains of a decay " of evidence in relation to the actions of Alexander, " Hannibal, Pompey, or Cæsar? How many fewer of " the events recorded by Plutarch, or Polybius, or Livy, " are believed now, (on account of a diminution of evi-" dence,) than were believed by Mr. Addison, or Lord " Clarendon, or Geoffrey Chaucer? We never hear per-" sons wishing they had lived ages earlier, that they " might have had better proofs that Cyrus was the con-

"queror of Babylon, that Darius was beaten in several "battles by Alexander, that Titus destroyed Jerusalem, "that Hannibal was entirely routed by Scipio, or Pom-"pey by Julius Cæsar; though we sometimes find men "of ardent and enterprising minds exclaiming, 'O that "I had lived and been present, when such splendid "events occurred, how lively an interest should I have "taken in such scenes, how much concern in their ter-"mination!' And, indeed, it is the frequent hearing of "such exclamations that causes men *to confound weight "of evidence with warmth or depth of feeling; and to "lose sight of the essential difference between real evidence, "or the true basis of belief in history, and the sensible im-"pression or influence which such history may make upon "the mind.*"

We have only to remark, before we dismiss this subject, that, whereas the evidence of facts which occurred at a distant period is usually placed under the head of *successive* evidence, this distinction, as applicable to the miracles of the gospel, must either be rejected altogether, or admitted with a caution against being misled by the ambiguous use of words. The evidence, in this case, is not to be confounded for a moment with that of a report transmitted through successive ages to the present time, since the record which contains the miraculous facts carries us back to the apostolic age; so that, admitting its antiquity to be what it pretends, of which there is the most satisfactory evidence, the only link in the succession is that which separates the performers or spectators of the miracles from their narrators, who in the case before us, however, are frequently the same persons.

In order to give that conspicuous place which is due to the greatest and most momentous of these miracles, as well as to do justice to the independent train of proofs by which it is supported, Dr. G. has assigned a separate Letter to the Resurrection of Christ, in which he has placed this great fact in the clearest light; and, to remove every shadow of hesitation arising from the minute variations in the account given of it by the evangelists, has

taken the pains to digest from their separate narratives a distinct statement of the whole transaction, which, as far as we have had time to examine it, appears very satisfactory.

To this succeeds an ample illustration of the argument for the truth of christianity, drawn from its early and extensive propagation; where the fact is placed beyond all contradiction, by numerous and decisive testimonies, adduced from the ancient apologists and pagan writers. The dates of the ten successive persecutions are accurately assigned; and the most striking circumstances attending the last, in particular, are distinctly and forcibly exhibited. This forms the subject of the Ninth Letter, which closes with some admirable observations on the intrinsic excellence of the religion of Jesus, tending to show that it corresponds to all the characters, and fulfils all the indications, which a revelation from heaven might be expected to possess.

The remaining Letters which compose this volume are employed in proving the inspiration of the Scriptures, and answering various miscellaneous objections and cavils advanced against the Bible. Although we have already adduced some specimens of the author's style and composition, and shall have occasion to produce more in the course of our strictures on the second volume, yet we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of laying before our readers the following highly beautiful and eloquent passage. Speaking of the analogy betwixt the difficulties offered in the sciences and the mysteries of religion, he observes—

"Philosophers, notwithstanding all these difficulties, "recommend the cultivation and diffusion of the sciences, "because of their tendency to sharpen the intellectual "faculties of man, and meliorate his condition in society. "With how much greater reason and earnestness, then, "should christians recommend the dissemination and "adoption of 'pure and undefiled religion,' considering "its direct tendency to enlarge the understanding, and "yet fill it with the contemplation of Deity; to purify "and harmonize the passions, to refine the moral sense,

"to qualify and strengthen for every function in life; to "sustain under the pressure of affliction, to afford con- "solation in sickness, and enable us to triumph in death!

"What other science can even make a pretension to "dethrone oppression, to abolish slavery, to exclude war, "to extirpate fraud, to banish violence, to revive the "withered blossoms of paradise? Such are the preten- "sions and blessings of genuine christianity; and wher- "ever genuine christianity prevails, they are experienced. "Thus it accomplishes its promises on earth, where it "alone has enemies; it will, therefore, accomplish them "in heaven, where its friends reign. Here, indeed, its "advocate must be reduced to silence; for how shall he "display the meaning of its *celestial* promises! How "describe dignity so vast, or picture glory so brilliant! "How shall language delineate what mind cannot "imagine! And where is that mind, among puny and "ephemeral creatures, that can penetrate the thick "obscure; that can describe the light of perfect know- "ledge, that can feel the glow of perfect love, that can "breathe the air of perfect happiness?"—Vol. I. pp. 75, 76.

We proceed to notice the most important positions and reasonings contained in the second volume, which the author has devoted to a display of the doctrines and duties of christianity. We are aware that many will suspect him of a partial and bigoted attachment to his own opinions, in consequence of the anxiety he manifests to communicate and support those views of christianity, which, in his estimation, form its most striking peculiarity. It is plain our author considers the evidences of christianity as entirely subservient to its doctrines; and that he is consequently far from supposing, with some modern divines, that he has accomplished his work by proving that christianity is a true and a genuine revelation from God. He judges it necessary to spend some time and some labour in considering *what it is* that is true, *what it is* that is revealed. Were we not familiar with the fact, we should be not a little surprised at the prevalence of a contrary persuasion; we should probably

think it strange that such an anxiety should be evinced to rest the truth of christianity on the firmest possible basis, along with such a profound indifference to every attempt to investigate its import. Some wonderful charm, it seems, is contained in a bare avowal that christianity is a revelation from God, apart from any distinct perceptions of its truths, or any solemn advertence to its genuine scope and tendency. Embalmed and preserved, like some Egyptian monarch, in the form of a venerable and antiquated document, it is to be carefully kept, and always approached with respect, but never allowed to take its place among the living, nor supposed to be useful to mankind according to any known law of operation. The most magnificent appellations are applied to it: it is the light of the world, the true riches, the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price. All these, and a thousand other encomiums, are lavished on the Scriptures, by men, who at the same time feel no scruple in insinuating that this boasted communication from heaven contains no truths beyond the limits of reason, and that what the bulk of christians in our age have deemed such, are the distempered visions of enthusiasm, if they are not, in some instances, to be ascribed to the erroneous conceptions, entertained by the apostles, of the religion they were appointed to propagate. It is the *possession* of a revelation, not the *use*, which these men are accustomed to contemplate and to value. As the miser conceives himself rich by the treasure which he never employs, so the persons to whom we allude suppose themselves enlightened by a book from which they profess to derive no information, and saved by a religion which is allowed to engage little or none of their attention. This is one of the most distinguished features in the character of those, who with exemplary modesty style themselves *rational* christians. In this spirit a distinguished prelate of the present age * has published a collection of tracts for the benefit of the junior clergy, in which not a single treatise is admitted, which professes to exhibit a view of christian doctrine; and has introduced it with a preface,

* Bishop Watson.

ingeniously calculated, under pretence of decrying dogmas, to bring all such inquiries into contempt. It certainly is not difficult to perceive whence this manner of thinking proceeds, nor whither it tends. It proceeds from a rooted aversion to the genuine truths of revelation; and had it not received a timely check, would have terminated in the general prevalence of scepticism. It presents a neutral ground, on which professed christians and infidels may meet, and proceed to assail with their joint force the substantial truth of our religion. There is nothing in such views of christianity to appal the infidel; nothing to mortify the pride, nothing to check or control the exorbitancies, of that "carnal mind" which is "enmity against God." In stripping the religion of Christ of all that is spiritual, they render it weak and inefficacious as an instrument of renovating the mind; and, by fostering its pride and sparing its corruption, prepare it for shaking off the restraints of religion altogether. It gives us, however, unfeigned satisfaction to perceive, that the evil we so much deprecate appears to have met with a fatal check; and that the present times are distinguished by two things, which we cannot but consider as most favourable prognostics,—an increased attention to the peculiar doctrines of christianity, and a growing unanimity with respect to the modes in which those doctrines are entertained. There is less disposition on the one hand, to receive for christianity a system of pagan ethics, and on the other to confound points of doubtful speculation with its fundamental doctrines. The religious zeal of the present day is more open and catholic than in former times, partaking less of the acrimony of party, and more of the inspiration of truth and charity. The line of demarcation betwixt sound doctrines and heresy is better ascertained than it has ever been before; and the christian world are equally averse from whatever approaches to socinian impiety, and from the mooting of interminable questions.

In the statements of the peculiar doctrines of christianity, there are two extremes to be avoided. The one is, that of pusillanimously shrinking from their bold

originality, and attempting to recommend them to the acceptance of proud and worldly-minded men by the artifices of palliation and disguise; of which, in our opinion, the Bishop of Lincoln has given an egregious specimen in his late work.* The other extreme is that of stating them in a metaphysical form, mixing doubtful deductions with plain assertions, and thereby incumbering them with needless subtleties and refinements. We should neither be ashamed of the dictates of the Spirit, nor "add to his words, lest we be reproved." They will always appear with the most advantage, and carry the most conviction, when they are exhibited in their native simplicity, without being mixed with heterogeneous matter, or with positions of doubtful authority. In our apprehension, the true way of contemplating the peculiar doctrines of christianity, is to consider them as *facts* believed on the authority of the Supreme Being; not to be proved by reason, since their truth does not result from any perceptible relations in our ideas, but they owe their existence entirely to the will and counsel of the Almighty Potentate. On this account, we never consider it safe to rest their truth on a philosophical basis, nor imagine it is possible to add to their evidence by an elaborate train of reasoning. Let the fair grammatical import of scripture language be investigated; and whatever propositions are, by an easy and natural interpretation, deducible from thence, let them be received as the dictates of infinite wisdom, whatever aspect they bear, or whatever difficulties they present. Repugnant to reason they never can be, because they spring from the Author of it; but superior to reason, whose limits they will infinitely surpass, we must expect to find them, since they are a communication of such matters of fact, respecting the spiritual and eternal world, as need not have been communicated, if the knowledge of them could have been acquired from any other quarter. The facts with which we have become acquainted in the natural world would appear stupendous, were they communicated merely on the evidence of testimony: they

* Entitled, "A Refutation of Calvinism."

fail to astonish us, chiefly because they have been arrived at step by step, by means of their analogy to some preceding one. We have climbed the eminence by a slow progression, and our prospect has insensibly widened as we advanced, instead of being transported thither instantaneously by a superior power. Revelation conducts us to the truth at once, without previous training, without any intellectual process preceding, without condescending to afford other proof than what results from the veracity and wisdom of the Creator: and when we consider that this truth respects much sublimer relations and concerns than those which subsist in the material world, —that it regards the ways and counsels of God respecting man's eternal destiny,—is it surprising it should embrace what greatly surpasses our previous conjectures, and even transcends our perfect comprehension? To a serious and upright mind, however, its discoveries are no sooner made, than they become supremely acceptable: the interposition of the Deity in the great moral drama is seen to be absolutely necessary; since none but infinite wisdom could clear up the intricacies, nor any power short of omnipotence relieve the distress produced. These very truths, which some ridicule as mysteries, and others despise as dogmas, are, to the enlightened, "sweeter than honey or the honeycomb;" apart from which, whatever else is contained in the Bible would be perfectly tasteless and insipid. Though he receives every communication from God with devout and grateful emotions, he feels no hesitation in confessing, that it is in these parts of revelation he especially exults and triumphs; it is these, which, in his estimation, entitle it to the appellation of "*marvellous light.*"

If it is no small gratification to find so perfect a concurrence in these sentiments, on the part of our author: to find them stated and illustrated in so able a manner as they are throughout this work, is a still greater. The first Letter in this volume is devoted to a general view of the christian doctrines, designed to obviate certain prejudices, and to prepare the mind for that serious inquiry into their nature and import, which cannot fail, under the

blessing of God, of conducting it to the most satisfactory conclusions.

Our author never loses sight of the gospel as a *restorative dispensation;* this is its primary and most essential feature; and the most dangerous and numerous aberrations from it, may be traced to the neglect of considering it in this light. It is not a prescription of a rule of life to the innocent, but the annunciation of a stupendous method of relief for the sinner. Overlooking all petty varieties, and subordinate distinctions, it places the whole human race on one level; abases them all in the dust before the Infinite Majesty; and offers, indiscriminately, a provision of sanctification to the polluted, and of pardon to the guilty. These are the glad tidings; this is the jubilee of the whole earth, proclaimed in the songs of angels, celebrated in the praises of the church, alike in her militant and her triumphant state—whether toiling in the vale of mortality, or rejoicing before the throne.

The second Letter in the series which composes this volume, is on the Depravity of Human Nature, where the reader will find the evidence of that melancholy but fundamental truth, exhibited with much conciseness, perspicuity, and force. The third is employed in stating the arguments for the atonement of Christ, under the four divisions of typical, prophetical, historical, and declaratory proofs; and the whole is closed by a very luminous and satisfactory answer to the most specious objections against that momentous truth. In adverting to the objection to a vicarious sacrifice, founded on the notion of its being unjust that the innocent should be appointed to suffer in the room of the guilty, we meet with the following admirable passage of Archbishop Tillotson, remarkable for that perfect good sense, simplicity, and perspicuity, which distinguish the writings of that excellent prelate.

" ' If the matter,' says he, ' were searched to the bot-
" tom, all this perverse contention about our Saviour
" suffering for our benefit, but not in our stead, will sig-
" nify just nothing. For if Christ died for our benefit,

" so as, some way or other, *by virtue of his death and suf-* " *ferings*, to save us from the wrath of God, and to pro- " cure our escape from eternal death; this, for aught I " know, is all that any body means by his dying in our " stead. For he that dies with an intention to do that " benefit for another, or to *save him from death*, doth cer- " tainly, to all intents and purposes, die in his place and " stead. And if they will grant this to be their mean- " ing, the controversy is at an end, and both sides are " agreed in the thing, and do only differ in the phrase " and manner of expression; which is to seek a quarrel, " and an occasion of difference, when there is no real " ground for it—a thing which ought to be very far from " reasonable and peaceable minds. For many of the " socinians say, that our Saviour's voluntary death and " sufferings procured his exaltation at the right hand of " God, and power and authority to forgive sins, and to " give eternal life to as many as he pleased: so that they " grant that his obedience and sufferings in the merito- " rious consequence of them, redound to our benefit and " advantage, as much as we pretend to say they do; only " they are loth, in express terms, to acknowledge that " Christ died in our stead; and this for no other reason, " that I can imagine, *but because they have denied it so* " *often and so long.*'"—Vol. II. p. 64.

We have only to say, on this part of the subject, that we heartily commiserate the state of that man's mind, who, whatever socinian prejudices he may have felt against the most glorious of all doctrines, that of the atonement, does not feel them shaken at least, if not removed, by the arguments adduced in this letter.

The next is devoted to the defence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which our author evinces in a masterly manner, from the predictions of the ancient prophets, compared with their application in the New Testament; from the conduct, the miracles, and the discourses of our Lord; from the declarations of his apostles; and from the concurrent testimony of the early christian writers and martyrs, before the council of Nice. Under the last head, the reader will meet with a copious induction of

passages, attesting this grand doctrine, selected with much judgement, and applied with great force. The author all along contends for the divinity of Christ as a *fundamental* tenet; and, of course, will forfeit all pretensions to candour with *rational* christians, on whose approbation, indeed, he appears to set very little value.

In the next Letter, which is on Conversion, he has treated of the nature and necessity of that new birth, on which our Lord insisted so strenuously in his discourse with Nicodemus, in a manner which will be as offensive to mere nominal christians as it will be instructive and satisfactory to serious and humble inquirers after truth. He shows, from well known and indubitable facts, the reality of such a change; and evinces its indispensable necessity, from the express declarations of scripture, the corruption of human nature, the exalted character of the Deity, and the nature of that pure and perfect felicity to which good men aspire after death. In illustrating this subject, he has made a happy use of Bishop Burnet's Narrative of the Conversion of the Earl of Rochester,—has carefully guarded his readers against the pernicious error of confounding regeneration with baptism,—and has closed the discussion with solving certain difficulties arising out of the subject, which have often perplexed serious minds.

As every effect naturally invites us to contemplate the cause, he passes from conversion to the consideration of Divine Influence, which is the subject of the succeeding Letter: and were we to give our opinion of the comparative merit of the different parts of this volume, we should be inclined to assign the palm to the disquisition on this confessedly mysterious subject. In no part, certainly, is the vigour of the author's very powerful understanding more eminently exerted; in none are the prejudices founded on a pretended philosophy more triumphantly dispelled. He has shown, in the most satisfactory manner, that the belief of an immediate divine influence on the mind, not only accords with the sentiments of the wisest men in pagan times, but that it is rendered highly reasonable by the close analogy it bears to the best-esta-

blished laws of the material world. Though there are many admirable passages in this portion of the work, which it would gratify us to lay before our readers, we must content ourselves with the following.

" No person can look into the world with the eye of a " philosopher, and not soon ascertain, that the grand " theatre of phenomena which lies before him, is naturally " subdivided into two great classes of scenery: the one " exhibiting constrained, the other voluntary motion; " the former characteristic of matter, the latter as clearly " indicating something perfectly distinct from matter, " and possessing totally opposite qualities. ' Pulverise " matter,' says Saurin, ' give it all the different forms of " which it is susceptible, elevate it to its highest degree " of attainment, make it vast and immense, moderate or " small, luminous or obscure, opaque or transparent, " there will never result any thing but *figures;* and " never will you be able, by all these combinations or " divisions, to produce one single sentiment, one single " thought.' The reason is obvious; a substance com-" pounded of innumerable parts, which every one ac-" knowledges matter to be, cannot be the subject of an " individual consciousness; the seat of which *must* be a " simple and undivided substance; as the great Dr. " Clarke has long ago irrefragably shown. Intellect and " volition are quite of a different nature from corporeal " figure or motion, and must reside in, or emanate from, " a different kind of being, a kind which, to distinguish " it from matter, is called spirit, or mind. Of these, the " one is necessarily inert, the other essentially active. " The one is characterised by want of animation, life, " and even motion, except as it is urged by something " *ab extra:* the other is living, energetic, self-moving, " and possessed of power to move other things. We " often fancy, it is true, that matter moves matter; but " this strictly speaking, is not correct. When one wheel, " or lever, in a system of machinery, communicates mo-" tion to matter, it can, at most, only communicate what " it has received; and if you trace the connexion of the " mechanism, you will at length arrive at a first mover,

' which first mover is, in fact, *spiritual*. If, for example, " it be an animal, it is evidently the spiritual part of that " animal from whence the motion originally springs. If, " otherwise, it be the descent of a weight, or the fall of " water, or the force of a current of air, or the expansive " power of steam, the action must be ultimately referred to " what are styled powers of nature, that is, to gravitation " or elasticity; and these, it is now well known, cannot " be explained by any allusion to material principles, but " to the indesinent operation of the Great Spirit, in whom " we live, and move, and have our being—the finger of " God touching and urging the various subordinate " springs, which, in their turn, move the several parts of " the universe. Thus God acts in all places, in all times, " and upon all persons. The whole material world, were " it not for his Spirit, would be inanimate and inactive: " all motion is derived either from his energy, or from a " spirit which he animates; and it is next to *certain*, " that the only primary action is that of spirit, and the " most direct and immediate that of spirit upon spirit."—P. 154.

We doubt not the intelligent reader will be of opinion, that the author has gone to the very bottom of this subject, and will feel highly gratified in seeing it placed in so clear and convincing a light; the more so, as he has taken care to guard against its most obvious abuse, by showing that the influence for which he contends is not be expected independent of means,—among which he considers prayer, and a conscientious regard to known duty, as the principal. We earnestly recommend this part of the performance to such of our readers as have, upon too light grounds, imbibed philosophical prejudices against the doctrine contended for; a doctrine which lies at the foundation of all spiritual religion, though treated by many with an excess of insolence and scorn, which can hardly be accounted for without adverting to the injudicious conduct of its advocates.

The important doctrine of Justification by Faith, forms the subject of the next Letter in the series. Here, after confirming the position he means to defend, by the

authority of the Homilies, he proceeds to a more particular discussion of the subject, under three heads of inquiry: What is meant by justification?—what by faith?—and what is the genuine import of "justification by faith?" Under each of these the reader will meet with much instruction, arising from a very luminous statement of truth, accompanied with happy illustrations. The charge against the doctrine pleaded for, of its tending to licentiousness, is very successfully combated and refuted.

The exhibition of the leading *doctrines* of christianity is completed in the three following Letters,—on Providence, the Resurrection, and the Eternal Existence of Man after Death. We perused, with much satisfaction, the author's masterly defence of a particular providence, the denial of which is, to all practical purposes, equivalent to the denial of a providence altogether. Trust in God is the act of an individual, as all the exercises of piety must necessarily be; so that if the providence of God embraces not the concerns of individuals, no rational foundation can be conceived for expecting protection from danger, or relief under distress, in answer to prayer. The denial of a particular providence is, it must be confessed, the best possible expedient for keeping God at a distance—and on that account so vehemently insisted on by certain periodical writers, the poison of whose impiety, prepared, it is generally understood, by *hallowed* hands, and distributed through the nation in a popular and seducing vehicle, has met with a powerful antidote and rebuke from Dr. Gregory, who, himself a layman, will be honoured as the champion of that religion which a clergyman has insulted and betrayed.* How is it that the conductors of the publication alluded to, allot to this clerical associate the province of libelling religion? Is it that its alliance with nominal sanctity gives rank impiety a new zest, at the same time that its total dereliction of principle more perfectly incorporates the specific design of the article with the general character of the work?

* See the Article on Methodism, in the Edinburgh Review.

In treating of the Resurrection of the Dead, the author has happily availed himself of the striking analogies which the system of nature presents, as if designed on purpose, as Tertullian more than insinuates, to excite the expectation of such an event. Among others highly deserving attention, we shall present our readers with the following, in the words of Dr. Gregory:—

" Nearly allied to these are the examples of peculiar " transformations undergone by various insects, and the " state of rest and insensibility which precede those " transformations: such as the chrysalis or aurelia state of " butterflies, moths, and silk-worms. The myrmeleon " formicaleo, of whose larva, and its extraordinary his- " tory, Reaumur and Roesel have given accurate descrip- " tions, continues in its insensible or chrysalis state about " four weeks. The libellula, or dragon-fly, continues " still longer in its state of inaction. Naturalists tell us, " that the worm repairs to the margin of its pond, in " quest of a convenient place of abode during its insen- " sible state. It attaches itself to a plant, or piece of dry " wood, and the skin, which gradually becomes parched " and brittle, at last splits opposite to the upper part of " the thorax: through this aperture the insect, now be- " come winged, quickly pushes its way; and, being thus " extricated from confinement, begins to expand its " wings, to flutter, and, finally, to launch into the air " with that gracefulness and ease which are peculiar to " this majestic tribe. Now, who that saw, for the first " time, the little pendant coffin in which the insect lay " entombed, and was ignorant of the transformation of " which we are now speaking, would ever predict that, " in a few weeks, perhaps in a few days or hours, it " would become one of the most elegant and active of " *winged* insects? And who that contemplates, with the " mind of a philosopher, this curious transformation, and " knows that two years before the insect mounts into air, " even while it is living in water, it has the rudiments of " wings, can deny that the body of a dead man may, at " some future period, be again invested with vigour and

" activity, and soar to regions for which some latent or-
" ganization may have peculiarly fitted it?"—P. 225.

In descanting on the change that will be effected by the resurrection, when we shall be invested with a glorified body, the language of the author rises to a high pitch of elevation, and exhibits a scene which surpasses the brightest visions of poetry; while the exactness of the delineation, in its most essential lineaments, is attested by the "true sayings of God." The science with which the mind of the author is so richly imbued, enables him to mingle a refined spirit of philosophy with the colours of imagination, which, without diminishing their brightness, compels the assent of the understanding, while it captivates the heart.

In the Letter on the Eternal Existence after Death, the author strenuously opposes the sleep of the soul, and urges formidable, and, we apprehend, irrefragable arguments, for interpreting the passages of scripture which speak of the everlasting misery of the impenitent, in their obvious and literal sense: nor have we met with a discussion of this awful subject so calculated to carry conviction to a philosophical mind, provided it be disposed to bow to the authority of revelation. His confutation of the reasoning of his opponents, founded on the supposed ambiguity of the terms employed to denote an eternal duration, is particularly masterly.

On the third branch of his subject, which relates to the Duties of Christianity, he is comparatively brief,—not, it is evident, from his undervaluing their importance, but partly, we conceive, on account of the length of his former discussions, and partly because in this part there is little room for controversy. He has contented himself with arranging the duties of christianity under three heads—those which relate to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves; and with illustrating and enforcing them by a direct appeal to the language of scripture.

Having endeavoured to put our readers in possession of the general plan and design of this work, we shall close this article with a few general observations on it.

Dr. Gregory, throughout, denominates the abettors of

the simple humanity of Christ, socinians, instead of employing their favourite appellation of unitarians. We rejoice that he has done so, and hope his example will be generally followed. To accede to the appellation of unitarians, is to yield up the very point in debate; for, ask them what they mean by unitarian, and they will feel no scruple in replying, that it denotes a believer in one God, in opposition to a tritheist. That this is not asserted at random, is evident, as well from many other facts, as from the following very remarkable one,—that when a noted academic was, some years since, expelled from the university of Cambridge, amidst various points which he insisted on in his defence, one was this, that it was quite absurd to censure him for avowing unitarian principles, since he never heard but of one person who publicly declared himself *not an unitarian*. Now, what did he mean by this singular assertion? Did he mean to say that he never heard of more than one person who publicly affirmed his belief in a *plurality of persons* in the Godhead? This is impossible. What could he mean, then, but that he never knew but of one person who affirmed himself *not to be a believer in one God?*—which is neither more nor less than to identify the term unitarian with a believer in one God, and the term trinitarian with a believer in three. Let the intelligent public judge whether it is not high time to withhold from these men an appellation which assumes the question at issue, and which cannot be bestowed without being converted into an occasion of insult and triumph over their opponents. There was a time when the learning and moderation of Lardner, and the fame and science of Priestley, combined to throw a transitory splendour over their system, and to procure from the christian world a forbearance and complaisance to which they were ill entitled. That time is past. Such *rational* christians as they are, should have discernment to perceive that it is not with them as in months past, when the candle of their leader shone around them: it becomes them to bow their spirit to the humbled state of their fortunes. They should learn at last to know themselves. The world is perfectly aware, whether they

perceive it or not, that socinianism is now a headless trunk, bleeding at every vein, and exhibiting no other symptoms of life but its frightful convulsions.

But why should they be offended at being styled socinians, when it is undeniable that they agree with Socinus in his fundamental position, (the simple humanity of Christ,) which is all the agreement that subsists between the followers of Calvin or Arminius, and those eminent persons? The calvinists are far from concurring in every particular with Calvin,—the arminians, with Arminius; yet neither of them have violently disclaimed these appellations, or considered them as terms of reproach. Why are the socinians only offended at being denominated after Socinus? Is it because they differ in the nature of Christ's person from that celebrated heresiarch? This they will not pretend. But they differ from him in many respects! In what respects? Is it in those respects in which his sentiments gave most offence to the christian world? Is it that they have receded from him in that direction which brings them nearer to the generally received doctrine of the church? Just the reverse. In the esteem of all but themselves they have descended many degrees lower in the scale of error, have plunged many fathoms deeper in the gulf of impiety; yet, with an assurance of which they have furnished the only example, they affect to consider themselves injured by being styled socinians, when they know, in their own consciences, that they differ from Socinus only in pushing the degradation of the Saviour to a much greater length —and that, in the view of the christian world, their religious delinquencies differ from his, only as treason differs from sedition, or sacrilege from theft. The appellation of socinian, as applied to them, is a term of forbearance, calculated, if they would suffer it, not to expose, but to hide, a part of their shame. Let them assume any denomination they please, provided it be such as will fairly represent their sentiments. Let them be styled antiscripturalists, humanitarians, semideists, priestleians, or socinians. But let them not be designated by a term which is merely coveted by them for the purpose of chicane and imposture.

Our readers will perceive that the system which Dr. Gregory strenuously abets is orthodoxy; but it is moderate and catholic; it is the orthodoxy of the three first centuries; it is that system which, communicated by Christ and his apostles, pervaded the church long before the confusion of modern sects arose, or even the distinction between protestants and catholics was heard of: it is the orthodoxy which has nourished the root of piety in every age, warmed the breasts of saints and martyrs, and will continue to subsist in the church till the heavens and the earth are no more.

We congratulate the public on the accession of Dr. Gregory to such a cause; and sincerely rejoice that, amidst his multifarious scientific pursuits, he has found time and inclination to meditate so deeply, and to exhibit so successfully, "the truth as it is in Jesus." We hope his example will stimulate other men of science and genius to pursue so noble a career. We will venture to assure them, that, upon a dying bed, it will occasion no regret to reflect upon their having enrolled their names with such illustrious laymen as Boyle, Newton, and Locke, in the defence of christianity.

In a beautiful passage of Euripides, Medea is introduced, expressing her surprise, that, amidst such a multitude of inventions and inquiries, the art of persuasion, the mistress of human volition, should alone have been neglected. This neglect cannot be imputed to Dr. Gregory. He has united, with extraordinary attainments in the severer sciences, the art of recommending his sentiments with the most impressive effect; and though he is above a solicitude respecting the minuter graces of finished composition, he exhibits, in an eminent degree, the most important ingredients of good writing. He is correct and luminous, and often rises to the tone of the most impassioned feeling. His language is eminently easy, flowing, and idiomatic. The abstractions of science have not in him exerted the influence often imputed to them, of chilling the heart, and impairing the vigour of the imagination. While he reasons with the comprehension and depth which distinguish the philosopher, he

feels with ardour, and paints with force. He is often inspired and transported with his theme. In the midst of pursuits which are not always found to have a propitious effect on the religious character of their votaries, he has found the means of preserving his devotion in its warmth, his faith in its purity, and his sensibility in its infantine freshness and vigour.

We must conclude with earnestly recommending this work to the attentive perusal of young persons whose minds have been cultivated by science and letters; and must be permitted to add, that we are acquainted with no book, in the circle of English literature, which is equally calculated to give persons of that description just views of the evidence, the nature, and the importance of revealed religion.

REVIEW

OF

BELSHAM'S MEMOIRS OF LINDSEY.

Memoirs of the late Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, A.M., including a brief Analysis of his Works; together with Anecdotes and Letters of eminent Persons, his Friends and Correspondents: also a general View of the Progress of the Unitarian Doctrine in England and America. By THOMAS BELSHAM, *Minister of the Chapel in Essex-street.* 8vo. Pp. xxiv. 544. 1812.

As the life of Mr. Lindsey is evidently adopted as a vehicle for the propagation of socinian sentiments, we shall be excused for being more copious in our remarks upon it, than the biography of a man of such extreme mediocrity of talents could otherwise possibly justify. If a zealous attachment to any system of opinions, can be supposed to be aided by its association with personal reputation, we cannot wonder at finding Mr. Lindsey's fondness for socinianism so ardent and so persevering, inasmuch as the annals of religion scarcely furnish an instance of a celebrity acquired so entirely by the adoption of a particular creed. Luther and Calvin would have risen to distinction, in all probability, if the Reformation had never been heard of; while the existence of such a man as Mr. Lindsey would not have been known beyond the precincts of his parish, had he not, under a peculiar combination of circumstances, embraced the tenets of Socinus.

His reputation is altogether accidental and factitious. Though the leading events of his life, with one exception, are marked by no striking peculiarities, yet, by the help of a great deal of adventitious matter, Mr. B. has

contrived to make it the groundwork of a bulky, and not unentertaining volume; disfigured, however, throughout, by that languid and inelegant verbosity which characterizes all his compositions. It must be confessed, Mr. Belsham has taken care in this work to exhibit himself as no ascetic, no religious enthusiast, but quite a man of the world; not by a lively delineation of its manners and foibles, still less by a developement of the principles by which mankind are actuated, but by such a profusion of compliments bestowed on men of rank and title, and so perfect a prostration before secular grandeur, as has never been paralleled, we suspect, in a christian divine. At the "pomp and circumstance" of human life, this philosopher appears awed and planet-struck, and utterly incapable of exercising that small portion of discrimination with which nature has endowed him. Every nobleman or statesman he has occasion to introduce, is uniformly ushered in with a splendid retinue of gorgeous epithets, in which there are as little taste and variety as if they had been copied verbatim from the rolls at the herald's office. Orators of pre-eminent powers, together with virtuous and enlightened noblemen, meet us at every turn; and we are not a little surprised at finding so much of the decoration and splendour of this mortal scene, in so close contact with the historical details of unitarianism. We have long remarked the eagerness of socinians to emblazon their system by associations with learning, rank, and fashion; but on no other occasion have we seen this humour carried so far as in these Memoirs.

The leading events of Mr. Lindsey's life are the following. He was born, June 20, 1723, at Middlewich in Cheshire, where his father was a mercer in respectable circumstances, but was afterwards reduced by misfortunes. His mother, whose maiden name was Spencer, was distantly related to the Marlborough family; and previously to her marriage, lived twenty years in the family of Frances, Countess of Huntingdon; a circumstance which led to considerable intimacy, that continued for some years, with the celebrated Selina, Countess

of Huntingdon, who married the son of that lady. Under the patronage of Lady Betty and Lady Ann Hastings, Mr. Lindsey was educated first at a school in the neighbourhood of Middlewich, whence he was removed, and placed under the care of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, master of the free grammar-school in that town, who is represented as a gentleman of distinguished learning and piety. His vacations were usually spent at the mansion of his noble patroness, in the vicinity of Leeds, during the life of Lady Betty Hastings; and, after her decease, at Ashby Place, near Ashby de la Zouch, in Leicestershire, where Lady Ann then fixed her residence. In the eighteenth year of his age, May 21, 1741, he was admitted a student at St. John's, Cambridge, where he acquitted himself with credit in his academical exercises, and behaved with such exemplary propriety as to attract the attention of Dr. Reynolds, Bishop of Lincoln, who thought fit to intrust him with the care of his grandson, a youth of fifteen. He was elected fellow of St. John's College in April, 1747. Having been ordained by Bishop Gibson, he was, at the recommendation of Lady Ann Hastings, presented to a chapel in Spital Square, by Sir George Wheler. In a short time after his settlement in London, the Duke of Somerset received him into his house in the capacity of domestic chaplain. He continued, after the decease of that nobleman, to reside some time with the duchess dowager, better known by the title of Countess of Hertford; and, at her request, he accompanied her grandson, the present Duke of Northumberland, then about nine years of age, and in a delicate state of health, to the Continent, where he continued two years; at the expiration of which time he brought back his noble pupil, improved both in his health and learning. From this distinguished personage he continued to receive attentions and favours as long as he lived. Immediately after his return from the Continent, he was presented by the Earl of Northumberland to the valuable rectory of Kirkby Whiske, in the north riding of Yorkshire; at first, under condition to resign it when the

person for whom it was intended should come of age; but this young man dying a short time afterwards, it was given to Mr. Lindsey unconditionally, in the usual form. In this very retired situation Mr. Lindsey continued about three years; and, during his residence in Yorkshire, he became acquainted with the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, at Richmond; a circumstance which led to important consequences, and to which he was indebted, under Providence, for the most important blessing of his life.

In the year 1756, at the request of the Huntingdon family, he resigned the living of Kirkby Whiske for the living of Piddletown, in Dorsetshire, which was in the gift of the Earl of Huntingdon. In this place he lived seven years; and, in 1760, married Miss Elsworth, the stepdaughter of Archdeacon Blackburne,—a lady whose principles were congenial with his own, and who is represented as possessed of a superior understanding and of exalted virtue. It was during his residence in that situation, that he first began to entertain scruples concerning the lawfulness of trinitarian worship, and of his continuing to officiate in the established church. It appears he had, from his early youth, disapproved of some things in the thirty-nine articles. Some years afterwards these doubts were matured into a full conviction that the divinity of Christ was an erroneous tenet, and that the Father was the sole object of worship; in consequence of which, while in Dorsetshire, he took some previous steps with a view to quitting his preferment in the church. In the year 1762, upon the appointment of the late Duke of Northumberland to be lord lieutenant of Ireland, he was strongly urged to accept the place of chaplain to his grace; which, from the preference he gave to a retired situation, he declined. An opportunity occurring, the year following, of exchanging his living for that of Catterick in Yorkshire, he made the exchange, for the sake of enjoying the society of Archdeacon Blackburne and his family, who lived in that neighbourhood. On this occasion, Mr. Belsham justly remarks, "It may appear

" singular that Mr. Lindsey could submit to that renewed
" subscription which was requisite in order to his induc-
" tion to a new living.

" And the case," he adds, " appears the more extra-
" ordinary, as many clergymen, who, in consequence of
" a revolution in their opinions, had become dissatisfied
" with the Articles, would never, for the sake of obtain-
" ing the most valuable preferment, subscribe them
" again, though, while they were permitted to remain un-
" molested, they did not perceive it to be their duty to
" retire from the church."—P. 17.

The extreme want of candour and sincerity evinced by such conduct, is very unsatisfactorily apologized for by Mr. Lindsey, and is very gently reproved by Mr. Belsham. The principal plea alleged by Mr. L. in defence of himself is, that as he continued to officiate in the forms of the liturgy, his renewed subscription gave him little concern, since he considered himself, as virtually repeating his subscription. At length, he brought himself, he says, to consider the trinitarian forms in the liturgy, and the invocations at the entrance of the litany, as

" A threefold representation of the one God, the
" Father, governing all things by himself and by his Son
" and Spirit; and as a threefold way of addressing him
" as a Creator, and original benevolent cause of all
" things, as Redeemer of mankind by his Son, and their
" Sanctifier by his Holy Spirit."—P. 23.

How far he was influenced by mercenary considerations in retaining his station under such circumstances, it is impossible to say; but that he was guilty of much collusion and impious prevarication in this affair, cannot be reasonably doubted. Nor is there any species of simulation or dissimulation in religion, which might not be justified on pretences equally plausible; and when we recollect that Mr. L. persisted in that conduct for a series of years, we shall find it difficult to conceive of him as that prodigy of virtue which Mr. Belsham represents him. " He must be a severe moralist," says Mr. B. " whom such a concession does not satisfy." And what is this

concession, that is to stop every mouth, and to convert censure into praise? We will give it in Mr. L.'s own words: it is this:

" Not," says he, " that I now justify myself therein; " yea, rather I condemn myself. But as I have humble " hope of the divine forgiveness, let not men be too rigid " in their censures."—P. 24.

It is impossible to conceive a confession of conduct extremely criminal, in terms of lighter reprehension; but, agreeably to the theory of Mr. B., the merit of repentance so much exceeds the moral turpitude of transgression, that the faintest indications of it transport him with admiration. For our parts, were we not aware of the tendency of socinianism to produce a most attenuated conception of the evil of sin, we should have expected to find such insincerity and impiety deplored in the strongest language of penitential sorrow. As we wish, however, to do ample justice to the real virtues of Mr. L., we feel a pleasure in quoting the following account of the manner in which he conducted himself while he was rector of Catterick.

" No sooner was he settled," says his biographer, " in " his new situation, than he applied himself with great " assiduity, in his extensive and populous parish, to per- " form the duties of a parochial minister. He regularly " officiated twice on the Sunday in his parish church, " and in the interval between the services he catechised " young people. He visited the sick, he relieved the " poor, he established and supported charity schools for " the children, he spent considerable sums of money in " feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in provid- " ing medicines for the diseased, and in purchasing and " distributing books for the instruction of the ignorant. " In his domestic arrangements the greatest economy " was observed, that he and his excellent lady might " have the greater surplus to expend in liberality and " charity; for it was a rule with him to lay up nothing " from the income of his living."—P. 26.

This is unquestionably a pleasing picture of the character of an exemplary christian pastor. It does not

appear that any considerable success attended his labours. On this head he contents himself with expressing a faint hope, that some of the seed he had sowed might not be lost.

In this situation he continued ten years, till a dangerous fit of sickness roused his conscience, and rendered his continuance in the discharge of his ecclesiastical functions insupportable. We are far from wishing to depreciate the value of that sacrifice which Mr. Lindsey tardily and reluctantly made to the claims of conscience; but we cannot conceal our surprise, that a measure to which he was forced, in order to quell the apprehensions he most justly entertained of the displeasure of the Almighty, after a system of prevarication persisted in for upwards of ten years, should be extolled in terms which can only be applied with propriety to instances of heroic virtue. To prefer the surrender of certain worldly advantages to a perseverance in conduct highly criminal, evinces a mind not utterly insensible to the force of moral obligation,—and nothing more. Our admiration must be reserved for a higher species of excellence; for an adherence to the side of delicacy and honour, where many plausibilities might be urged to the contrary; or a resolute pursuit of the path of virtue, when it is obstructed by the last extremities of evil. Mr. Lindsey renounced, it is true, a respectable and lucrative situation in the church, rather than continue any longer in the practice of what he considered as idolatry. But he was unincumbered with a family; he possessed some personal property; and enjoyed the friendship of several great and noble personages, who were never likely to suffer him to sink into absolute poverty. He merely descended to the level where many of the best, and some of the greatest of men, have chosen to place themselves, and where his friend Dr. Priestley, whose talents would have commanded any preferment in the church, chose, from an attachment to the same principles, to remain for life. We approve his resignation of his living; but we confess we are more disposed to wonder that he could reconcile him-

self to continue in his situation so long, than that he should feel himself compelled to quit it at last.

This event took place in the year 1773; after which he came to London, and a plan was set on foot for opening a chapel for him in the metropolis, where, retaining the use of a liturgy modified agreeably to his views, he might promulgate the tenets of Socinus. Many persons, Mr. B. informs us, both of the establishment and among the dissenters, aided the undertaking; among whom are particularly enumerated Dr. Priestley, and Dr. Price, Samuel Shore, Esq. of Norton Hall, in Yorkshire, and Robert Newton, Esq. of Norton House, in the same village.

These gentlemen, in conjunction with others, entered into a subscription, to indemnify him for the necessary expenses incurred in procuring and fitting up his chapel. The place fixed upon for this grand experiment was a room in Essex House, Essex Street, which having before been used as an auction-room, was capable, at a moderate expense, of being turned into a convenient place of worship. Here Mr. L. introduced his improved liturgy, formed very much upon the plan of Dr. Clarke's, but with such variations as corresponded to the difference of his views from those of that celebrated divine. From this period the life of Mr. L. proceeds in a very equable and uniform course, with little worthy of remark, besides the various publications to which the system he had adopted gave birth; and over the congregation formed in Essex Street he continued to preside till his seventieth year, when he thought fit to retire from a public station: after which he lived sixteen years, when he was attacked with a disease which was judged to be a pressure on the brain, and expired in the eighty-sixth year of his age. Such are the outlines of a narrative which Mr. Belsham has contrived to extend to upwards of five hundred octavo pages. It is by no means our intention to follow the biographer through his boundless excursions, or to criticise every remark which appears to us justly obnoxious to censure. We shall content ourselves with selecting a few passages, and making a few

observations, which may serve to illustrate the genius and progress of socinianism, the promotion of which evidently appears to be the sole object of the writer of these Memoirs.

The secession of Mr. Lindsey from the established church produced much less impression than might have been expected; nor does it appear that his example was followed by one individual among the clergy, until Mr. Disney, his brother-in-law, after the lapse of some years, adopted the same measure, and afterwards became his colleague in the ministry. The establishment of a socininian chapel with a reformed liturgy in the metropolis. is narrated by our biographer with the utmost pomp, as forming a distinguished epoch in the annals of religion; and, undoubtedly, great hopes were entertained of its producing a memorable revolution among the episcopalians: but these expectations were frustrated. The auditory, composed chiefly of persons of opulence, (among whom the Duke of Grafton made the principal figure,) was at no time very numerous; and no similar society was formed from among the members of the established church in any part of the United Kingdom. The utmost that the efforts of Lindsey, Priestley, and others, effected. was to convert the teachers of arianism among the dissenters into socinians, who exerted themselves with tolerable success to disseminate their principles in their respective congregations: so that the boasted triumphs of socinianism consisted in sinking that section of the dissenting body, which had already departed from the faith, a few degrees lower in the gulf of error. From these very Memoirs under consideration, we derive the most convincing evidence that the tenets of Socinus, with respect to the nation at large, have lost ground, and that the people of England are by no means so favourably disposed to them as formerly. They also present us a very full and particular account of the association of a part of the clergy at the Feathers Tavern, to procure relief in the matter of subscription; for which purpose, agreeably to a resolution of the general body, on the 6th of February, 1772, a petition was presented to the house

of commons. The number of the petitioners amounted to nearly two hundred and fifty, among whom, the names of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, and Law, bishop of Carlisle, were the most distinguished. Of the state of the public mind in the metropolis, we have a striking picture in a letter from John Lee, afterwards solicitor-general, a zealous friend of the discontented clergy. "It will surprise you who live in the country," says he, "and consequently have not been informed of the discoveries of the metropolis, that the christian religion is not thought to be an object worthy of the least regard; and that it is not only the most prudent, but the most virtuous and benevolent thing in the world, to divert men's minds from such frivolous subjects with all the dexterity that can be. This is no exaggeration, I assure you; on the contrary, it seems to be the opinion (and their conduct will show it) of nine-tenths of both houses of parliament!" Allowing for some slight exaggeration arising from the chagrin and vexation of the writer, it is still impossible not to perceive, if any credit is due to his statement, that parliament were not in a disposition to feel any conscientious objections to the repeal of the Articles, and that if they opposed such a measure, that opposition originated simply from the fear of innovation, common to politicians. The manner in which the debate was conducted when the affair came actually under the consideration of the house, confirms this conclusion.

There was not one member who expressed his belief in the Articles: it was treated entirely as a political question, without once adverting to its intrinsic merits, as involving a religious conìroversy; and Mr. Hans Stanley opposed the bringing up of the petition, as it tended to disturb the peace of the country, which, in his opinion, ought to be the subject of a fortieth Article, which would be well worth all the thirty-nine.* With such levity and contempt was the national creed treated at that time. Will the sturdiest champion of socinianism affirm that

* See pages 54, 55, of these Memoirs.

a similar discussion in the house of commons, or in the upper house, would be conducted in a similar manner at present? or that there would be one member who would contend for the continuance of the Articles on the ground of their intrinsic excellence and verity? The fact is, that through the secularity and irreligion of the clergy, evangelical truth was nearly effaced from the minds of the members of the establishment in the higher ranks, and that an indolent acquiescence in established formularies, had succeeded to the ardour with which the great principles of religion were embraced at the Reformation. Such was the state of the public mind, that in a contest between orthodoxy and heresy, the former proved triumphant, merely because it was already established, and had the plea of antiquity and prescription in its favour. Since that period, vital religion has revived in the national church; the flame of controversy has been widely spread; the inconsistency of socinianism with the Scriptures, together with its genuine tendency and character, have been fully developed; it has lost the attraction of novelty; it has revolted the minds of men by its impiety; and, having been weighed in the balance, it has been found wanting. If among the clergy there still subsist a small remnant who are attached to those unscriptural tenets, they are content with being connived at, and nothing could now urge them to the imprudence of presenting their claims for legal security to the legislature. We hear nothing of an intention to renew the scenes which took place at the Feathers Tavern in 1772.

We consider this as a decisive proof that socinianism has lost ground in the nation, notwithstanding its prevalence in societies of a certain description among the dissenters. Those who never formally renounced the orthodox doctrine, have, in consequence of recent discussions, become more than ever attached to it: while that class of dissenters who were already moving in an heretical direction, have reposed in socinianism as their natural centre of gravity. From several other circumstances recorded in these Memoirs, the same inference may be drawn with respect to the discredit under which

this system lies at present, compared with the countenance and indulgence with which it was received thirty or forty years back. While Mr. Lindsey was deliberating on the propriety of quitting his living, it was suggested to him by Dr. Priestley, that he might continue to officiate, by making such alterations in the public offices of devotion as would accord with his peculiar views. "Nor was there any ground to suspect," says Mr. B., "that he would have met with any molestation from his superiors." Mr. Chambers, who held the living of Oundle, in Northamptonshire, Mr. Disney, for many years, and others, did so, without being called to account for their conduct. We should be sorry to express ourselves with an improper degree of confidence; but we may venture to express a firm persuasion, that such a silent repeal of the doctrine of the church by the mere authority of a parochial minister, would not now be permitted to pass unnoticed, or uncensured, in any part of the kingdom. The dignitaries of the church are alive to the importance of the distinguishing truths of christianity, and would show themselves prompt and eager, as appears from recent instances, to discourage the open disavowal of them. We have no hesitation in asserting, that the hope of rendering the tenets of the Polish heresiarch popular and prevalent throughout this nation, was at no period so completely extinguished as at the present; and from a certain air of despondency which the memorialist of Lindsey betrays, amidst all his gasconades, we are convinced he is of the same opinion. The disposition on all occasions to vaunt of their success, and to predict, with great confidence, the speedy triumph of their principles, is a peculiar feature in the character of modern socinians; and the absurd and exaggerated statements of matters of fact into which this propensity betrays them, are truly ludicrous. All other sorts of euthusiasts of whom we have either heard or read, are, in this respect, cold and phlegmatic compared with them. In various extracts from the letters of Mr. Lindsey's correspondents, and of others, representations are made of numerous and rapid conversions to socinianism, which Mr. B., from a

regard to truth and decency, finds it necessary to correct and apologize for, as the effusion of well-intended but intemperate zeal. The boast of success is almost invariably the precursor of a statement on the part of Mr. B., in which it is either repealed or qualified; and it is but doing him justice to say, that his judgement and experience have exempted him from those illusions and deceptions of which his party have become the easy dupes. We had been confidently informed, for instance, that almost all the people of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts, were becoming socinians, and that the ministers, with the exception of one or two, had already declared themselves such; when it appears, from the unimpeachable authority of Mr. Wells, himself a socinian, and an inhabitant of that city, that there is but one professedly unitarian chapel throughout New England: and so little sanguine is he with respect to the spread of that doctrine, that he strongly deprecates its discussion, from a conviction that it will issue in producing, among the body of the people, a more confirmed attachment to orthodoxy.* It is also worthy of remark, that these extravagant boasts of success, are not accompanied with the slightest advertence to the moral or spiritual effects which the socinian doctrine produces on the character: this is a consideration which rarely, if ever, enters into the mind of its most zealous abettors, who appear to be perfectly satisfied if they can but accomplish a change of sentiment, however inefficacious to all practical purposes. Their converts are merely proselyted to an opinion, without pretending to be converted to God: and if they are not as much injured by the change as the proselytes made by the pharisees of old, it must be ascribed to causes totally distinct from the superior excellence of the tenets which they have embraced. They have been taught to discard the worship of Christ, and to abjure all dependence upon him as a Saviour—an admirable preparation, it must be confessed, for a devout and holy life. Let the abettors of these doctrines produce, if they can, a single instance of a person, who, in consequence of

* See his Letter in the Appendix of the Memoirs.

embracing them, was reclaimed from a vicious to a virtuous life, from a neglect of serious piety to an exemplary discharge of its obligations and duties; and their success, to whatever extent it has been realized, would suggest an argument in their favour deserving some attention. But who is ignorant that among the endless fluctuations of fashions and opinions recorded in the annals of religion, the most absurd and pernicious systems have flourished for a while; and that arianism, for instance, which these men profess to abhor almost as much as orthodoxy, prevailed to such a degree, for years, as to threaten to become the prevalent religion of Christendom?* Socinianism can boast but few converts compared with infidelity; in England, of late, they have gone hand in hand, and their progress has been simultaneous, derived from the same causes, and productive of the same effects. Shall we therefore affirm that infidelity is to be rejected with less confidence, because it possesses in reality that to which socinianism only pretends? When we reflect on the inert and torpid character of socinianism, it is surprising any serious expectation should be entertained of its final triumph. From innumerable passages in these Memoirs, it appears that the far greater number, of those who have embraced it in the established church, have been content to retain their situation; and it is certain that of the two hundred and fifty who joined in the petition for relief in the matter of subscription, Mr. Lindsey was the only person who made any sacrifice of emolument to principle. We find both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Belsham incessantly reproaching unitarians with timidity, in declining the avowal of their sentiments; and the former remarking, with just indignation, that, amidst the multitudes that concurred in his views, there was but one member of the established church that afforded him any pecuniary aid towards defraying the necessary expenses attendant on the opening of his chapel. The avowal of socinianism among dissenters has rarely been followed by worldly privations; and in the church

* See the Second Book of Sulpicius Severus, chap. 35. "Tum hæresis Arii prorupit *totumque orbem* invecto errore turbaverat."

of England, where such consequences must have ensued, it has not been made. Except in the instances of Lindsey, Jebb, and a very few others, the converts to socinianism have stooped to the meanest prevarication, and the most sacrilegious hypocrisy, rather than sacrifice their worldly emolument and honours. Compare this with the conduct of the puritans, in the reign of Charles the Second, who, though the points at issue were comparatively trifling and insignificant, chose, to the number of two thousand, to encounter every species of obloquy and distress, rather than do violence to their conscience; and learn the difference between the heroism inspired by christian principle, and the base and pusillanimous spirit of heresy. What an infatuation to expect that a system which inspires its votaries with no better sentiments and feelings than are evinced by these decisive facts, will ever become the prevailing belief; a system which, while it militates against every page of revelation, is betrayed by the selfish timidity of its followers! The system of Socinus is a cold negation: the whole secret of it consists in thinking meanly of Christ; and what tendency such a mode of thinking can have to inspire elevation or ardour, it is not easy to comprehend. If it is calculated to relieve the conscience of a weight, which the principles of orthodoxy render it difficult to shake off, without complying with the conditions of the gospel, infidelity answers the same purpose still better, and possesses a still higher degree of simplicity,—meaning by that term what socinians generally mean—the total absence of mystery.

Great part of these Memoirs is occupied in giving a copious analysis of Mr. L.'s publications; which possessing no intrinsic merit, nor having excited more than a temporary interest, it would be trifling with the patience of our readers, to suppose they could derive either entertainment or instruction from seeing them abridged. Of Mr. Lindsey, considered as a writer, it is sufficient to observe, that the measure of intellect he displayed was the most ordinary, and that he was not possessed of the power, in its lowest degree, of either inventing what was

rare, or embellishing what was common. He was perspicuous, because he contented himself, on all occasions, with the most commonplace thoughts; he was simple, because he aspired to nothing more than to convey his meaning in intelligible terms, without the least conception of force, elegance, or harmony. Though his writings are replete with professions of unbounded liberality and candour, it is evident, from his treatment of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, that he was indulgent only towards those who approached nearer to infidelity than himself. Nothing can be conceived more splenetic and acrimonious than his examination of that ingenious author's Plea for the Divinity of Christ, who, in return for compliments and condescensions, which however unworthy of the cause he was defending, were sufficient to soften a Cerberus, met with nothing but rudeness and insolence. It was truly amusing to see the imbecility of a Lindsey assuming the airs of a Warburton. Throughout the whole of that publication, he affects to consider Mr. Robinson as a mere superficial declaimer; although his friend, Archdeacon Blackburne, Mr. B. informs us, always spoke of the Plea as a most able and unanswerable performance. So much for the modesty of this heretical confessor!

But it is time to leave Mr. L. to that oblivion which is the infallible destiny of him and of his works, and to proceed to make a few remarks on the narrative, and the miscellaneous strictures of his biographer. In the first place, we congratulate him on his abatement of that tone of arrogance which so strikingly characterised his former publications. Not that we ever expect him to exhibit himself in the light of an amiable or unassuming writer, which would be for the Ethiopian to change his skin; but it is with pleasure we remark less insolence and dogmatism than he has displayed on other occasions. He writes like a person who is conscious he is supporting a sinking cause; an air of despondency may be detected amidst his efforts to appear gay and cheerful. He knows perfectly well that he is celebrating the obsequies, not the triumph of socinianism; and from the little advantage it has derived from its former efforts, his vanity will

not prevent him from suspecting that he is giving ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

In this, as in all his former publications, he evinces a total ignorance of human nature, together with that propensity to overrate the practical effect of metaphysical theories, which almost invariably attaches to metaphysicians of an inferior order. He who invents a metaphysical system, which possesses the least claim to public regard, must have paid a profound attention to the actual constitution of human nature. He must have explored the most delicate and intricate processes of the mind, and kept a vigilant eye on the various phenomena which it presents. He is necessarily *above* his theory, having been conducted to it by an independent effort of thought. He has not adjusted his observations to his hypothesis, but his hypothesis to his observations. The humble disciple, the implicit admirer, proceeds too often in a directly opposite manner. All he knows of the mental constitution, in its more intricate movements, he derives from the system prepared to his hand, which he adopts with all its crudities, and confidently employs as the key which is to unlock all the recesses of nature. Having been accustomed to contemplate the human mind with a constant view to the technical arrangements to which he has devoted himself, he estimates the practical importance of metaphysical theories by what has passed in his own mind. We are fully convinced that the bulk of mankind are very little influenced by metaphysical theories; and that even in minds which are more prone to speculation, metaphysical dogmas are seldom so firmly embraced, or so deeply realized, as to be productive of important practical effects. The advocate of necessity, and the champion of liberty, will, in the same state of moral proficiency, act precisely the same part, in similar circumstances. Mr. Belsham, however, in the plenitude of his enthusiasm for the doctrine of philosophical necessity, ascribes, without hesitation, the ruin of multitudes of young per sons to their embracing the opposite tenet. It is truly surprising, that he, who was so quick-sighted as to perceive the tendency of the notion of liberty to promote

immoral conduct, should entertain no suspicion of a similar tendency in the doctrine of God's being the author of sin, which Mr. B. repeatedly asserts.

"The true solution of the first difficulty," says Mr. B., "whether God be the author of sin, appears to be this: "that God is, strictly speaking, the author of evil; but "that, in the first place, he never ordains or permits evil "but with the view to the production of a greater good, "which could not have existed without it. And, second-"ly, that though God is the author of evil, both natural "and moral, he is not the approver of evil; he does not "delight in it for its own sake; it must be the object of "his aversion, and what he would never permit or en-"dure, if the good he intends could have been accom-"plished without it. With respect to the justice of "punishment, the best and only philosophical solution "of it is, that, under the divine government, all punish-"ment is remedial. Moral evil is the disease, punish-"ment is the process of cure, of greater or less intensity, "and of longer or shorter duration, in proportion to the "malignity and inveteracy of the malady, but, ultimate-"ly, of sovereign efficacy, under the divine government, "to operate a perfect cure; so that those whose vices "have been the means of proving, purifying, and exalt-"ing the virtues of others, shall, in the end, share with "them in their virtue and their triumph, and *the impar-"tial justice* and infinite benevolence of the Divine Being "will be made known, adored, and celebrated, through "the whole created universe."—Pp. 323, 324.

The malignant tendency of such representations as the foregoing is so obvious, that it is quite unnecessary to point it out to our readers. How vain are all precautions against sin, if, in all cases, it is produced by the irresistible power of the Deity! And what motive can remain for avoiding it, if it is certain of being ultimately crowned with happiness and glory! The distinction between producing it, and approving of it for its own sake, with which the doctrine is attempted to be palliated, is perfectly futile; for this is ascribing no more to the Deity than must, in justice, be ascribed to the most profligate

of mankind, who never commit sin for its own sake, but purely with a view to certain advantages with which it is connected: and the difference between the two cases arises not from any distinction in the moral character of the proceeding, but simply from the superior comprehension of view with which the conduct of the Deity is accompanied. As the perpetration of vice is, upon this system, a calamity, not a crime, it is but fitting and necessary it should receive a compensation: and for this Mr. B. has provided, by representing the ultimate happiness of such as have been the means of purifying the virtue of others by their vices, as the effect of the impartial justice of the Deity. Persons of this description are, it seems, a species of benefactors; and it is but right they should, in due time, be rewarded. They are the scavengers of the universe; and, having done a great deal of necessary, though dirty, work, they are entitled to commiseration at present, and to proportionable compensation in another state of being. How admirably are these views adapted to promote a horror of sin! What tenderness of conscience, fear of offending, deep humility and penitence, may we expect to find in Mr. Belsham and in his admirers! Doubtless, their eyes are a fountain of tears, which, like Jeremiah, they are incessantly pouring out for those vices and impieties which are the sure and certain pledges of endless felicity!

To expect Mr. B. to write a bulky volume, without intermingling a large portion of infidelity, would be to expect grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles. In the work under consideration, he fully maintains the consistency of his character. He more than insinuates his disbelief of a great, if not the greater, part of the Mosaic history. Mr. Lindsey, having expressed himself in terms of just reprehension with respect to the conduct of those who reject the books of Moses, Mr. B. takes upon him to censure the severity of his friend.

"But surely, if the venerable writer," says he, "had "reconsidered the case with his usual calmness and im- "partiality, he would have seen that a person may be a "very firm believer in the divine mission and doctrine of

"Christ, and be well satisfied with the general evidence "of the divine legation of Moses, while he at the same "time may entertain very serious doubts, whether the "books commonly attributed to Moses were really written "throughout by him, and whether either the narrative or "the institute exist at present exactly in the form in "which he delivered them."—P. 408.

But, supposing the narrative to be in certain points false, the institution misrepresented and disguised, and the books which we term the Pentateuch the production of some unknown author,—who does not see the impossibility of separating the truth from the falsehood, and of attaching, on any consistent principles, to any part of it, the credit due to a divine communication? The spirit of infidelity evinced in these passages is little different from that which pervades the pages of Bolingbroke and Voltaire. But such is the genuine progress of socinianism: it begins with denying some of the clearest propositions in the New Testament, in order to which its claims to inspiration must be weakened or annulled; whence it proceeds to dispute the authority of the Old, till the whole Bible is virtually set aside as the umpire of controversy. Among the other sublime discoveries to which Mr. B. has been led by a critical investigation of the writings of the New Testament, one is, that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses no authority whatever; or to use a term of his own invention, no *external* authority. Speaking of the Duke of Grafton, he says—

"In a paper dated Jan. 1, 1792, the duke expressed a "belief that the exaltation of Christ to dominion and "authority was the consequence of his submission to "those sufferings which 'were so efficacious, perhaps so "necessary, to his own glory, and to the future happi-"ness of mankind.' His mind seems at this time to "have been perplexed with some obscure notion of the "unscriptural doctrines of meritorious sufferings, and of "the external authority of Jesus Christ; which, how-"ever, he regards as a mystery, which 'it will probably "never be given to man in the present state' to under-"stand, and which therefore 'must consequently be

" ranked among those articles, the belief of which can-
" not be necessary to salvation.'"—P. 327.

Though the apostles have affirmed the exaltation of the Saviour to the government of the universe, in every variety of form which language can supply,—though he himself declared that all power was given to him in heaven and in earth,—his possession of external authority is unblushingly asserted to be an unscriptural tenet. We challenge Mr. B. to invent terms more strongly expressive of the highest dominion and authority, than those which the inspired writers have employed in describing the exaltation of the Saviour. We can regard this assertion of Mr. Belsham's in no other light than as a specimen of that theological audacity which forms the principal feature in that gentleman's character, and which, happily, can have no other effect than to inspire a complete abhorrence of the system which renders such a procedure necessary. We cheerfully accept, however, the concession implied in these daring positions, that the doctrine of the meritorious suffering of Christ is inseparably connected with his exaltation; and as the latter cannot, without the utmost indecency, be denied, the former follows of course. We can annex no other meaning to the epithet *external*, as applied to *authority*, than what might be more clearly expressed by the term *personal;* or, in other words, Mr. B.'s intention is to assert that our Lord possesses no authority whatever, apart from the credit due to his mission and to his doctrine; and that the christian church is in no other sense governed by Christ, than the Jews might be affirmed to be governed by Moses after his decease. It must be obvious, however, to every one, that this is not to explain, but boldly and unequivocally to contradict, the writings of the apostles on this important subject.

We shall close these strictures on Mr. Belsham, by quoting one passage more, which illustrates at once his insufferable arrogance and his servile deference to authority.

" What childish simplicity and ignorance," says he, " does it betray in some, to feign or to feel alarmed at

"the tendency of those doctrines which are avowed by "such men as Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb, "and which are represented by them as lying at the "foundation of all right views of the divine govern- "ment, of all rational piety and virtuous practice, and 'of all rational and substantial consolation! And yet "such persons feel no alarm at the vulgar notion of phi- "losophical liberty, or the power of acting differently in "circumstances precisely similar; a notion, the fond "persuasion of which encourages men to venture into "circumstances of moral danger, and to which thou- "sands of the young and inexperienced especially are "daily falling victims."—P. 394.

The arrogance, folly, and absurdity of this passage, are scarcely to be paralleled, even in the writings of its inimitable author. The most celebrated metaphysicians and reasoners in every age and in every country—Malebranche, Cudworth, Clarke, Butler, Chillingworth, Reid, and innumerable others, who have avowed the strongest apprehensions of the immoral tendency of the doctrine of fatalism, or, as it has been styled, philosophical necessity, are consigned by a writer who has not capacity sufficient to appreciate their powers, much less to rival their productions, to the reproach of childish simplicity and ignorance; and this for no other reason than their presuming to differ in opinion from Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb! What is this but to enjoin implicit faith? And why might not a Roman Catholic, with equal propriety, accuse of childish simplicity and ignorance, those who should suspect the pernicious tendency of sentiments held by Pascal, Fenelon, and Bossuet? We must be permitted to remind Mr. B. that we hold his pretensions to a liberal and independent turn of thought extremely cheap; that, possessing nothing original even in his opinions, to say nothing of his genius, his most vigorous efforts have terminated in his becoming a mere trainbearer in a very insignificant procession.

Having already detained our readers longer on this article than we ought, we should now put a period to our remarks, but that there is one particular connected

with the history of Mr. Lindsey, which we conceive has been too often set in such a light as is calculated to produce erroneous impressions. We refer to the resignation of his living, in deference to his religious scruples. He is, on this account, everywhere designated by Mr. Belsham by the title of "the venerable confessor;" and what is more to be wondered at, the late excellent Job Orton, in a letter to his friend, the late Rev. Mr. Palmer, of Hackney, speaks of him in the following terms:

"'Were I to publish an account of silenced and "ejected ministers, I should be strongly tempted to insert "Mr. Lindsey in the list he mentions in his Apology "with so much veneration. He certainly deserves as "much respect and honour as any of them for the part "he has acted. Perhaps few of them exceeded him in "learning and piety. I venerate him as I would any of "your confessors. As to his particular sentiments, they "are nothing to me. An honest, pious man, who makes "such a sacrifice to truth and conscience as he has done, "is a glorious character, and deserves the respect, esteem, "and veneration of every true christian.'"

We have no scruple in asserting that this unqualified encomium is repugnant to reason, to scripture, and to the sentiments of the best and purest ages of the christian church. To pass over the absurdity of denominating Mr. L. a silenced and ejected minister, merely on account of his voluntary withdrawment from a community whose distinguishing tenets he had abandoned, we are far from conceiving that the merit attached to his conduct on this occasion was of such an order as to entitle him for a moment to rank with confessors and martyrs. To the praise of manly integrity, for quitting a situation he could no longer conscientiously retain, we are ready to acknowledge Mr. L. fully entitled. We are cordially disposed to admire integrity wherever we perceive it; and we admire it the more in the present instance, because such examples of it, among beneficed ecclesiastics, have been rare. But we cannot permit ourselves to place sacrifices to error on the same footing as sacrifices to truth, without annihilating their distinction. If re-

vealed truth possess any thing of sanctity and importance, the profession of it must be more meritorious than the profession of its opposite ; and, by consequence, sacrifices made to that profession must be more estimable. He who suffers in the cause of truth is entitled to our admiration ; he who suffers in the defence of error and delusion, to our commiseration: which are unquestionably very different sentiments. If truth is calculated to elevate and sanctify the character, he who cheerfully sacrifices his worldly emolument to its pursuit, must be supposed to have partaken in no common degree of its salutary operation. He who suffers equal privations in the propagation of error, evinces, it is confessed, his possession of moral honesty ; but unless persuasion could convert error into truth, it is impossible it should impart to error the effects of truth. Previous to the profession of any tenets whatever, there lies an obligation on all, to whom the light of the gospel extends, to believe the truth. We are bound to confess Christ before men, only because we are bound to believe on him. But if, instead of believing on him, we deny him in his essential characters, which is the case with socinians, the sincerity of that denial will indeed rescue us from the guilt of prevarication, but not from that of unbelief. It is possible, at least, since some sort of faith in Christ is positively asserted to be essential to salvation, that the tenets of the socinians may be such as to exclude that faith: that it does exclude it, no orthodox man can consistently deny ; and how absurd it were to suppose a man should be entitled to the reward of a christian confessor, merely for denying, *bona fide*, the doctrine which is essential to salvation ! The sincerity which accompanies his profession entitles him to the reward of a confessor : the error of the doctrine which he professes exposes him at the same time to the sentence of condemnation as an unbeliever ! If we lose sight of socinianism for a moment, and suppose an unbeliever in christianity, *in toto*, to suffer for the voluntary and sincere promulgation of his tenets, we would ask Mr. Orton in what rank he would be inclined to place his infidel confessor. Is *he*

entitled to rank with *any* of the confessors? If he is, our Saviour's terms of salvation are essentially altered; and though he pronounces an anathema on him who shall deny him before men, the sturdy and unshaken denial of him in the face of worldly discouragement, would answer, it seems, as well as a similar confession. Men are left at their liberty in this respect; and they are equally secure of eternal happiness, whether they deny or whether they confess the Saviour, providing they do it firmly and sincerely. If these consequences appear shocking, and he be forced to assert the negative, then it is admitted that the truth of the doctrine confessed enters essentially into the inquiry, whether he who suffers for his opinions, is to be, *ipso facto*, classed with christian confessors. Let it be remembered that we are not denying, that he who hazards his worldly interest rather than conceal or dissemble his tenets, how false or dangerous soever they may be, is an honest man, and, *quoad hoc*, acts a virtuous part,—but that he is entitled to the same kind of approbation with the champion of truth. That the view we have taken of the subject is consonant to the Scriptures, will not be doubted by those who recollect that St. John rests his attachment to Gaius and to the elect Lady, on the truth which dwelt in them; that he professed no christian attachment but for the truth's sake; and that he forbade christians to exercise hospitality, or to show the least indication of friendship, to those who taught any other doctrine than that which he and his fellow-apostles had taught. The source of the confusion and absurdity which necessarily attach to the opinions of Mr. Orton and others, here expressed on this subject, consists in their confounding together moral sincerity and christian piety. We are perfectly willing to admit that the latter cannot subsist without the former; but we are equally certain that the former is by no means so comprehensive as necessarily to include the latter. We should have imagined it unnecessary to enter into an elaborate defence of so plain a position as this, that it is one thing to be what the world styles an honest man, and another to be a christian—a distinction, obvious

as it is, sufficient to solve the whole mystery, and to account for the conduct of Mr. L., without adopting the unmeaning jargon of his biographer, who styles him, in innumerable places, the *venerable confessor*. How repugnant the language we have been endeavouring to expose, is to that which was held in the purest and best ages of the church, must be obvious to all who are competently acquainted with ecclesiastical history. The Marcionites, we are informed by Eusebius, boasted of their having furnished a multitude of martyrs; but they were not the less on that account considered as deniers of Christ. Hence, when orthodox christians happened occasionally to meet at the places of martyrdom with Montanists and Manichæans, they refused to hold the least communion with them, lest they should be supposed to consent to their errors.* In a word, the *nature* of the doctrine professed must be taken into consideration, before we can determine that profession to be a christian profession; nor is martyrdom entitled to the high veneration justly bestowed on acts of heroic piety, on any other ground than its being, what the term imports, an *attestation of the truth*. It is the saint which makes the martyr, not the martyr the saint.

* Euseb. lib. 5, c. 14.

REVIEW

OF

BIRT ON POPERY.

A Summary of the Principles and History of Popery, in Five Lectures, on the Pretensions and Abuses of the Church of Rome. By John Birt. 8vo. pp. 176. 1823.

At a time when popery is making rapid strides, and protestants in general have lost the zeal which once animated them, we consider the publication we have just announced as peculiarly seasonable. What may be the ultimate effect of the efforts made by the adherents of the church of Rome to propagate its tenets, aided by the apathy of the opposite party, it is not for us to conjecture. Certain it is, there never was a period when the members of the papal community were so active and enterprising, or protestants so torpid and indifferent. Innumerable symptoms appear of a prevailing disposition to contemplate the doctrines of popery with less disgust, and to witness their progress with less alarm, than has ever been known since the Reformation. All the zeal and activity are on one side; and, while every absurdity is retained, and every pretension defended, which formerly drew upon popery the indignation and abhorrence of all enlightened christians, we should be ready to conclude, from the altered state of public feeling, that a system once so obnoxious had undergone some momentous revolution. We seem, on this occasion, to have interpreted, in its most literal sense, the injunction of "hoping all things, and believing all things." We persist in maintaining that the adherents

to popery are materially changed, in contradiction to their express disavowal: and while they make a boast of the infallibility of their creed, and the unalterable nature of their religion, we persist in the belief of its having experienced we know not what melioration and improvement. In most instances, when men are deceived, it is the effect of art and contrivance on the part of those who delude them; in this, the deception originates with ourselves; and, instead of bearing *false* witness against our neighbour, such is the excess of our candour, that we refuse to credit the unfavourable testimony which he bears of himself.

There is, in the mean time, nothing reciprocal in this strange method of proceeding: we pipe to them, but they will not dance. Our concessions, instead of softening and mollifying, seem to have no other effect upon them, than to elate their pride and augment their arrogance.

An equal change in the state of feeling towards an object which has itself undergone no alteration whatever, and where the party by which it is displayed profess to adhere to their ancient tenets, it would be difficult to specify. To inquire into the causes of this singular phenomenon, would lead to discussion foreign to our present purpose. Let it suffice to remark, that it may partly be ascribed to the length of time which has elapsed since we have had actual experience of the enormous cruelties of the papal system, and to the fancied security we possess against their recurrence; partly to the agitation of a great political question, which seems to have had the effect of identifying the cause of popery with that of protestant dissenters. The impression of the past has in a manner spent itself; and, in many, its place is occupied by an eagerness to grasp at present advantages, and to lay hold of every expedient for shaking off the restraints which a narrow and timid policy has imposed. The influence of these circumstances has been much aided by that indifference to religious truth which too often shelters itself under the mask of candour: and to such an extent has this humour been

carried, that distinguished leaders in parliament have not scrupled to represent the controversy between the papists and the protestants as turning on obscure and unintelligible points of doctrine, scarcely worth the attention of enlightened minds; while a beneficed clergyman of some distinction has treated the whole subject as of no more importance than the idle disputes agitated by the schoolmen. It was but a few years since, that a celebrated nobleman, in the house of peers, vehemently condemned the oath of abjuration for applying the term *superstitious* to the doctrine of transubstantiation. In exactly the same spirit the appellation of papist is exchanged for catholic,—a concession which the adherents of the church of Rome well know how to improve, as amounting to little short of a formal surrender of the point at issue. For, if the papists are really entitled to the name of *catholics*, protestants of every denomination are involved in the guilt of schism.

This revolution in the feelings of a great portion of the public, has probably been not a little promoted by another cause. The present times are eminently distinguished by the efforts employed for the extension of vital religion: each denomination of christians has taken its station and contributed its part towards the diffusion of evangelical sentiments. The consequence has been, that the professors of serious piety are multiplied, and form at present a very conspicuous branch of the community. The space which they occupy in the minds of the public, is not merely proportioned to their numerical importance, still less to their rank in society: it is, in a great measure, derived from the publicity of their proceedings, and the numerous associations for the promotion of pious and benevolent objects, which they have originated and supported. By these means, their discriminating doctrines, essential to vital piety, have become better known and more fully discussed than heretofore. However beneficial, as to its general effects, such a state of things may have been, one consequence, which might be expected, has been the result. The opposition of the enemies of religion has become more virulent, their

hatred more heated and inflamed; and they have turned with no small complacency to the contemplation of a system which forms a striking contrast to the object of their detestation. Popery, in the ordinary state of its profession, combines the "form of godliness" with a total denial of its power. A heap of unmeaning ceremonies, adapted to fascinate the imagination and engage the senses,—implicit faith in human authority, combined with an utter neglect of divine teaching,—ignorance the most profound, joined to dogmatism the most presumptuous,—a vigilant exclusion of biblical knowledge, together with a total extinction of free inquiry,—present the spectacle of religion lying in state, surrounded with the silent pomp of death. The very absurdities of such a religion render it less unacceptable to men whose decided hostility to truth inclines them to view with complacency whatever obscures its beauty or impedes its operation. Of all the corruptions of christianity which have prevailed to any considerable extent, popery presents the most numerous points of contrast to the simple doctrines of the gospel; and just in proportion as it gains ground, the religion of Christ must decline.

On these accounts, though we are far from supposing that popery, were it triumphant, would allow toleration to any denomination of protestants, we have the utmost confidence that the professors of evangelical piety would be its first victims. The party most opposed to them look to papists as their natural ally, on whose assistance, in the suppression of what they are pleased to denominate fanaticism and enthusiasm, they may always depend: they may, therefore, without presumption, promise themselves the distinction conferred on Ulysses—that of being last devoured.

Whether popery will ever be permitted, in the inscrutable counsels of heaven, again to darken and overspread the land, is an inquiry in which it is foreign from our province to engage. It is certain that the members of the Romish community are at this moment on the tip-toe of expectation, indulging the most sanguine hopes, suggested by the temper of the times, of soon

recovering all that they have lost, and of seeing the pretended rights of their church restored in their full splendour. If any thing can realize such an expectation, it is, undoubtedly, the torpor and indifference of protestants, combined with the incredible zeal and activity of papists; and universal observation shows what these are capable of effecting---how often they compensate the disadvantages arising from paucity of number, as well as almost every other kind of inequality.

From a settled persuasion that popery still is what it always was---a detestable system of impiety, cruelty, and imposture, fabricated by the father of lies---we feel thankful at witnessing any judicious attempt to expose its enormities and retard its progress. The Lectures, published some years since, by Dr. Fletcher, are well adapted for this purpose, and entitle their excellent author to the esteem and gratitude of the public. The Protestant, a series of periodical papers, composed by Mr. M'Gavin, of Glasgow, contains the fullest delineation of the popish system, and the most powerful confutation of its principles, in a popular style, of any work we have seen. Whoever wishes to see popery drawn to the life, in its hideous wickedness and deformity, will find abundant satisfaction in the pages of that writer.

The author before us has been studious of conciseness, and has contented himself with exhibiting a brief, but a very correct and impressive outline of that copious subject. As these Lectures were delivered at Manchester, it is probable the author's attention was more immediately directed to it, by witnessing the alarming progress which the tenets of the Romish church are making in that quarter. There is nothing in them, however, of a local nature, or which is calculated to limit their usefulness to any particular part of the kingdom. They are adapted for universal perusal, and entitled to an extensive circulation.

The first Lecture is on the claim of the church of Rome to the appellation of *catholic*, the futility and absurdity of which the author has exposed, in a concise, but highly satisfactory manner. On this part of the

argument, he very acutely remarks, that "no church, " which is not coeval with christianity itself, ought to " pretend to be the universal christian church.

" The contrary sentiment is evidently unreasonable and " absurd; for it supposes, that something which has " already a distinct and complete existence, may be a " part of something else which is not to come into being " until a future period; or, which is equivalent to this, " that what is entirely the creation of to-day, may include " that which was created yesterday. This would be in " opposition to all analogy; and, therefore, if the church " of Rome had not an earlier commencement than all " other christian churches,—if the origin of that church " be not coincident and simultaneous with the first mo- " ment of christianity,—then the pretension of the " church of Rome to be the 'catholic church' is alto- " gether vain. Now, it is clear, from the Acts of the " Apostles, that many christian churches flourished in the " East, before the gospel was even preached at Rome. " It was enjoined on the apostles, that their ministry " should begin at Jerusalem; and in that city the first " christian church was actually constituted. Until the " persecution which arose about the stoning of Stephen, " Christ was not preached beyond the borders of Pales- " tine, and even then, with a scrupulous discrimination, " 'to the Jews only.' In fact, churches were formed in " Jerusalem and Judea, at Damascus and Antioch, and " the gospel was sent even into Ethiopia, before there is " any evidence of its being known at Rome."—Pp. 10, 11.

The second Lecture is an historical exposition of the principal events which led to the elevation of the church of Rome to supremacy: in tracing these, much acumen is evinced, as well as an intimate acquaintance with ecclesiastical history.

The third Lecture consists of a masterly delineation of the genius and characteristics of the papal ascendancy. In this part of the work, the judicious author enters deeply into the interior spirit of popery. After setting in a striking light the seeming impossibilities it had to

encounter ere it could accomplish its object, he enumerates the expedients employed for this purpose, under the following heads. The votaries of the papal see succeeded: 1. By enslaving the mental faculties to human authority.—2. By giving to superstition the semblance and sanction of religion.—3. By administering the affairs of their government on the corruptest principles of worldly policy. Each of these topics is illustrated with great judgement, and a copious induction of facts. On the last of these heads, we beg leave to present to our readers the following extract, as a specimen of the style and spirit of this writer.

" 'My kingdom is *not* of this world,' saith our Lord; " 'My kingdom *is* of this world,' is truly the sentiment " of the pope; and here lies the difference. The only " consistent view of this church, is that of a political " establishment, employing, indeed, religious terms and " denominations, but only as the pretext and colour of " an inordinate pursuit of secular and temporal objects. " Read its history as that of a christian church; you " stumble at every step, and every period shocks you " with the grossest incongruities: read the same history " as one of the kingdoms of this world; all is natural " and easy, and the various proceedings and events are " just what you are prepared to expect. The papal " supremacy was conceded by an earthly monarch; all " its interests have varied with the fluctuations of human " affairs; and when the princes of this world shall with" draw their support, it will fall, and 'great will be the " fall thereof.' The bishops of Rome have ever pursued, " under the guise of religion, some earthly advantage; " and thus Pope Leo the Tenth exclaimed most appro" priately, 'O, how profitable has this fable of Jesus " been unto us!'

" The first object of these subtle politicians, was to " provide a revenue, ample and permanent. Kings and " nations were accordingly laid under tribute; and to the " utmost extent of papal influence, the treasures of " Christendom flowed into the exchequer of Rome. On " every hand, art, fraud, and intimidation, were equally

"and successfully employed, in transferring the wealth "of the world to the coffers of the church.

"This was effected partly by regular ecclesiastical "taxes, but principally by selling every thing the church "of Rome had to bestow, and by perpetually inventing "new articles of bargain and sale. Hence the multiply-"ing of sacraments; hence the sale of pardons, in-"dulgences, benefices, dignities, and of prayers for the "living and the dead. Every thing was prostituted; "and under the pretence of being the 'bride, the Lamb's "wife,' this church became the 'mother of harlots.' In "the same spirit, the death-beds of the rich were be-"sieged, that they might bequeath their property to the "clergy; and the consciences of opulent criminals were "appeased, in return for liberal donations to ecclesiastical "funds. Thus an amount of riches almost incredible "accrued to the papal treasury."—Pp. 94—96.

The fourth Lecture is occupied by giving a rapid sketch of the most interesting events in the past history of the Romish community. We have seldom, if ever, seen so large a body of facts exhibited with perfect perspicuity within so small a compass: the author's complete mastery of the subject appears from the ease with which he has condensed an immense mass of historical matter, without the least indication of disorder or confusion.

The last of these lectures presents an animated and instructive view of the prospects which are opening on the christian church, and the probable issue of the causes and events which are in present operation.

The notice we have taken of this publication will, we trust, induce our readers to avail themselves of the instruction and the pleasure which an attentive perusal cannot fail to bestow. It is distinguished for precision and comprehension of thought, energy of diction, and the most enlarged and enlightened principles of civil and religious freedom; nor should we find it easy to name a publication, which contains, within the same compass, so much information on the subject which it professes to treat. A little redundance of ornament,

and excess in the employment of figurative language, are excrescences very pardonable in a young writer, and which more mature years and experience may be safely left to correct. On the whole, we cannot dismiss the work before us, without sincerely congratulating the author on that happy combination of philosophical discrimination with christian piety, which it throughout displays.

END OF VOL. II.

J. Haddon, Castle-street, Finsbury.